This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

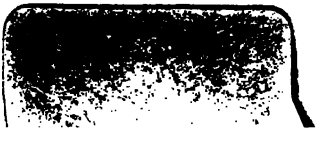
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

The BEST MAN

HAROLD MACGRATH

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



The
ST MAN

by

LD MACGRATH
of The Man on the
Hearts and Ma
a Rogue Etc

Illustrations by Will Grefé

Decorations by Franklin Booth

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

The BEST MAN

by

HAROLD MACGRATH

Author of The Man on the Box, Hearts and Masks, Half a Rogue, Etc.

With Illustrations by Will Grefé

Decorations by Franklin Booth

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

PS 3525
A2423 B4

COPYRIGHT 1907
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

OCTOBER

To the Ramsdells

In Memory of

Many Pleasant Florentine Days

Thanks are due *Ainslee's Magazine* for permission to republish The Advent of Mr. "Shifty" Sullivan.

The BEST MAN

THE BEST MAN

I

CARRINGTON folded the document and thoughtfully balanced it on his palm. What an ironical old world it was! There was a perpendicular wrinkle about his nose, and his lips had thinned into a mere line which drooped at the corners. The drone of a type-writer in the adjoining room sounded above the rattle-tattle of the street below. Through the opened windows came a vague breath of summer redolent of flowers and grasses; for it was but eleven o'clock of the morning, and the smell of sun-baked brick and asphalt had not yet risen through the air. Far beyond

the smoking, ragged sky-line Carrington could see the shifting, glittering river and the great ships going down to the sea. Presently the ashes from his dead cigar fell in a gray cascade down his coat and tumbled across his knees, but he gave no heed.

Ironical old world indeed! Here, suddenly and unexpectedly, he found himself upon the battle-field of love and duty, where all honest men find themselves, sooner or later. To pit the heart against the conscience, impulse against calculation! Heigh-ho! Duty is an implacable goddess, and those who serve her most loyally are most ruthlessly driven. She buffets us into this corner and into that, digs pitfalls for the hesitant foot, and crushes the vacillating.

As all men will, Carrington set about to argue down his conscience; the heart is

so insistent a counselor. Why should he give up the woman he loved, simply because duty demanded he should? After all, was not duty merely social obligation? What was it to him that the sheep were sheared? Was it right that he, of all men, should divide the house, throw the black pall of dishonesty over it, destroy his own happiness and hers, when so simple a thing as a match would crumble into nothingness this monument to one man's greed and selfishness? The survival of the fittest; if he put aside Self, who would thank him? Few, and many would call him a fool or a meddler. So many voices spoke that he seemed to hear none distinctly.

He alone had made these astonishing discoveries; he alone had followed the cunningly hidden trail of the serpent. He could stop where he was and none would

be the wiser. To be sure, it was only a question of time when the scandal would become public through other channels; but in that event he would not be held responsible for bringing about the catastrophe. Besides, the ways of the serpent are devious and many, and other investigators might not come so close to the trail.

He had gone about his investigations without the least idea where they would lead him. At the beginning he had believed that the guilty ones were none higher than petty officials; but presently he found himself going over their heads, higher and higher, until, behold! he was at the lair of the old serpent himself. A client had carelessly dropped a bit of information, and it had taken seed with this surprising result. Henry Cavenaugh, millionaire promoter, financier, trust

magnate, director in a hundred money-gathering concerns; Henry Cavenaugh, the father of the girl he loved and who loved him! Could it be he, indeed? It seemed incredible.

It was not a case of misappropriation of funds, such as a man may be guilty of when temporarily hard pressed. It was a bold and fraudulent passing of dividends that rightfully belonged to the investors; of wrongfully issuing statements of bolstered expenses, lack of markets, long strikes (promoted by Cavenaugh and his associates!), insufficient means of transportation. An annual dividend of seven per cent. on many millions had been dishonestly passed over. The reports that there would be no dividends encouraged a slump in the listed price of the stock, and many had sold under par value, thereby netting to Cave-

naugh and others several millions. And the proof of all this lay in his hand!

It had been a keen hunt. Many and many a blind trail had he followed, only to come back to the start again. All that now remained for him to do was to pass this document on to the hands of the intrepid district attorney, and justice would be meted out to the guilty.

Her father! The picture of him rose suddenly and distinctly in his mind. Tall, powerfully built, a hooked nose, keen blue eyes, an aggressive chin, a repellent mouth, Henry Cavenaugh was the personification of the modern Crœsus. Immutable in purpose, dogged in perseverance, a relentless enemy, a Jesuit in that the end always justified the means, he stood a pillar in the world of finance, where there is sometimes justice but never any mercy. Thirty-five years before he

had been a messenger in a stock-broker's office. Of his antecedents nothing was known until he broke one of the famous gold corners in the seventies, when a handsome, ruddy-cheeked little Irishman bobbed up serenely from nowhere in particular and claimed to be the great Cavenaugh's father. But his proofs were not convincing, and when the son showed a decided contempt for him, he gently subsided into oblivion and was heard of no more. From time to time Carrington gathered a small crumb of information regarding his sweetheart's grandfather; but whenever he broached the subject, however tactfully, everybody concerned headed the conversation for a different port.

Carrington had never laid eyes on the old gentleman, and, for all he knew to the contrary, he might be a myth. He rea-

soned that in all probability the grandfather was illiterate, uncouth, and rather an awkward piece of family furniture to handle, when the family proper were ingratiating themselves into the Chippendales of society. Unfortunately, Mother Cavenaugh, good-hearted and amiable in her way, had been stung by the bee of the climbers, and her one ambition was to establish herself and daughters in society; and had not he, Carrington, come of an aristocratic family (poor, it is true), the doors of the Cavenaugh manor would never have opened to his knock. Even as it was, he was *persona non grata* to the millionaire, who was mad for a duke in the family. Besides, Cavenaugh had his suspicions of any lawyer who grubbed outside the breastworks.

Some doves circled above a church-spire a few streets over the way, break-

ing the sunbeams against their polished wings. Finally they settled on the slate roof and fell to strutting and waddling and swelling their breasts pompously. Carrington opened and refolded the document, but he did not take his eyes from the doves. What should he do? What ill wind had blown this thing into his doorway? Nothing had warned him of the impending tangle. Until two days ago Cavenaugh was at the other end of the world, so far as his investigations at that time were concerned.

He struck a match. The sliver of pine flared palely in the sunshine, writhed and dropped, black and charred, to the floor. He shrugged his shoulders. Chivalry of this sort was not the order of the day. There was something stronger than the voice of duty, something stronger than the voice of the heart; it was the

voice of pity, which urged its appeal for the hundreds of men and women who had invested their all in the Cavenaugh concerns. The thought of their ultimate ruin, should Cavenaugh be permitted to pursue his course unchecked, bore heavily upon him. No, he could not do it. He must fight, even if he lost his all in the battle. It is a fine thing to right a wrong. All the great victories in the world have been won for others than the victors. That Cavenaugh was the father of the girl he loved must have no weight on the scales of justice.

Resolutely he thrust the document into his coat pocket, closed his desk and relighted his cigar. In that moment he had mapped out his plan of action. That very night he would lay the whole thing very clearly before the girl herself, and whatever decision she made, he would stand or

fall by it, for he knew her to be the soul of honor.

Poor girl! It was a heart-breaking business. How in the world should he begin, and where should he stop? Ah, that was it! He would lay the matter before her in a manner that would conceal the vital nearness of the case, as if it were some client of his who was unknown to her. And when she had judged the case, he would speak the bald truth. It would be a cruel blow, but nevertheless he must deal it. She loved her father, and after his own peculiar fashion her father loved her. She was the only one in the family who could wheedle him out of a purpose; to the rest of the family his word was law immutable. It was very hard, sighed Carrington. For the father he had neither pity nor sympathy; there were many ugly tales about his financial dealings; but his

whole heart went out unreservedly to the girl.

When Carrington had gone to Cavenaugh, his heart in his throat, to speak to him relative to his daughter's hand, he unwittingly knocked off the top of a volcano.

"Marry my daughter?" Cavenaugh roared, emphasizing his wrath and disapproval with a bang of fist upon palm. "My daughter shall marry only among her equals, not among her inferiors. A king is not good enough for my Kate." There was another bang of the fist, decided and final. "A lawyer? Not if I know myself. I wouldn't trust a lawyer out of sight," bluntly. "Kate shall marry a duke or a prince, if I can find one suitable."

Carrington would have smiled had the moment been less serious.

"No man can possibly appreciate her worth more readily than I, sir," he replied, "or love her more dearly."

"Love?" with a snort. "Twaddle out of story-books!"

"But you yourself love her."

"I'm her father," Cavenaugh returned complacently, adding a gesture which had the effect of describing the fact that it was perfectly logical for a father to love his daughter, but that it wasn't logical at all for any other male biped to love her.

"I am sorry," said the disheartened suitor, rising. "I suppose that after this unpleasant interview . . ."

"Oh, you're a decent sort," interrupted Cavenaugh generously; "and if you are of a mind to behave yourself hereafter, you will always find a chair at my table. But my daughter is not for you, sir, em-

phatically not. That is all, sir;" and Cavenaugh picked up his evening paper.

After such a rebuff, most young men would have given up; but Carrington never gave up till there was no possibility of winning. Immediately after the interview he went to the higher court with his appeal.

"Let us have patience," the girl whispered. "I'll undertake to bring him to reason."

But Carrington went home that night without his love for the father increasing any.

And so the matter stood at the present time. The affair had gone neither forward nor backward.

Ah, were he less honest, how easily he could bring the old curmudgeon to terms! There was that in his pocket which would open the way to the altar, quickly enough.

But Carrington was manly and honest to the core, and to him blackmail stood among the basest of crimes. Many times during the past forty-eight hours the tempter had whispered in his ear that here was a way out of his difficulties; but the young man had listened unmoved.

During the summer and autumn months of the year the Cavenaughs lived at their country place over in New Jersey, and there Carrington spent the week-ends. There were horses to ride, golf and tennis, and a Saturday night dance at the Country Club. To be with the girl you love, even if you can't have her, is some compensation. Cavenaugh never joined the fêtes and sports of the summer colonists, but he offered no objections to the feminine members of his household for selecting Carrington as their escort for the week-ends. Indeed, by now he began to

consider Carrington as a harmless, sensible, well-groomed young man, who relieved him of all the painful duties to the frivolous. If the colonists insisted on coupling his daughter's name with Carrington's, let them do so; when the proper moment came he would disillusionize them. For himself, he always had some good old crony down to while away the dull Sundays; and together they consummated plans that gave the *coup de grâce* to many a noble business galleon. This particular summer there were no dukes or princes floating around unattached, and Cavenaugh agreed that it was a commendable time to lay devices by which to ambush the winter money.

There were nights when Cavenaugh did not sleep very well; but of this, more anon.

Shortly after his determination to tell

Kate half a truth, Carrington left the office and made an early train into New Jersey. All the way over to the Cavenaugh station he was restless and uneasy. The fatal papers still reposed in his pocket. He had not dared to leave them in the office safe; his partner, who had had no hand in the investigation, might stumble across them, and that was the last thing in the world he desired. He knew not exactly what to do with them; for they burned like fire in his pocket, and seemed to scorch his fingers whenever he touched them to learn if they were still there. A thousand and one absurd suppositions assailed him. Supposing, for instance, there should be a wreck; supposing he should be robbed; supposing he should leave his vest on the links; and so forth and so forth. It was very depressing. If only he stood in the open, unhandi-

capped; if only he might throw the gauntlet at Cavenaugh's feet the moment they met!

Ah, if he had only attended to his own affairs! But he hadn't; and his inquisitiveness had plunged him into a Chinese tangle from which there seemed to be no exit. But there was an exit; only, if at that moment Cassandra had whispered the secret into his ear, it would have appealed to him as the most improbable thing under the sun. However, there are no trustworthy Cassandras these sordid days; a single look into the future costs a dollar; and as for Greek choruses, they trundle push-carts on the East Side.

He had broken bread and eaten salt at Cavenaugh's table; and now it was decreed that he must betray him. It was not a pleasant thought. And still less pleasant was the thought of telling Kate (in

a roundabout fashion, it is true) that her father was not an honest man. According to financial ethics, what Cavenaugh did was simply keen business instinct; nothing more. If you or I should happen to bend an odd cornice of the majestic pillar of law, we'd be haled off to the county jail forthwith; but if we possessed the skill to smash the whole fabric or rather, to continue the metaphor, the whole pillar, the great world would sit up and admire us. What are old laws for, anyhow? Build you never so wisely your law, there will always be some one to come along and tack on a nice little amendment, subtly undoing in a moment what it took years of labor to accomplish. In this instance, Cavenaugh had been careless; he had forgotten to introduce his amendment. An infinitesimal grain of sand will stop the best regulated clock. The in-

fallible invariably die on the heels of their first victory.

On leaving the train, Carrington espied the Cavenaugh station carriage. The coachman was talking to a little wiry old man, whose gray eyes twinkled and whose complexion was mottled and withered like a wind-fall apple. Seeing Carrington draw nigh, the coachman touched his hat respectfully, while the little old man, who was rather shabbily dressed, stepped quickly around the corner of the platform. Evidently he did not wish to be inspected at close range. Carrington threw his suit-case and golf-bag into the carriage, and followed them. Thereupon the coachman touched the horses lightly, and they started westward at a brisk trot.

"Who's your friend?" asked Carrington, who, though never familiar, was always friendly toward his inferiors.

"He's no friend of mine, sir," answered the coachman, with well-bred contempt. "Miss Cavenaugh directed me to drive you straight to the club, sir."

"Very well," replied Carrington, lighting a cigar and settling back among the cushions.

Immediately he forgot all about the shabby old man, and began to inventory his troubles. He must hide the papers somewhere. All the evidence he had, together with the names of the witnesses, was on his person; for in making the whole he had prudently destroyed the numerous scraps. If this document fell into alien hands, the trouble would double itself. He puffed quickly, and the heat of the cigar put a smart on his tongue. He had nothing to do but wait.

On the steps of the club's porte-cochère he was greeted by Miss Cavenaugh, who

was simply and tastefully dressed in white. If there was a sudden cardiac disturbance in Carrington's breast, the girl's tender beauty certainly justified it. The fresh color on her cheeks and lips, the shining black hair that arched a white forehead, the darkly fringed blue eyes, the slender, rounded figure, the small feet and shapely hands, all combined to produce a picture of feminine loveliness warranted to charm any masculine eye. Let the curious question Cavenaugh's antecedents, if they were so inclined, thought Carrington; here was abundant evidence of what a certain old poet called the splendid corpuscle of aristocracy.

Her sister went by the sonorous name of Norah. She was seventeen, a bit of a tomboy, but of the same build and elegant carriage that distinguished Kate from ordinary mortals; only Norah's eyes

were hazel-tinted and her hair was that warm brown of the heart of a chestnut-bur. She was of merry temperament, quick to like or to dislike, and like her sister, loyal to those she loved. Both girls possessed that uncommon gift in women, the perfect sense of justice. You never heard them gossiping about anybody; and when a veranda conversation drifted toward scandal, the Cavenaugh girls invariably drifted toward the farther end of the veranda. All the men admired them; they were such good fellows.

The mother of the girls was, as I have remarked, good-natured and amiable, inclined toward stoutness, and a willing listener to all that was going on. She considered it her bounden duty to keep informed regarding the doings of her intimate friends, but with total lack of malice. At this moment she occupied her

favorite corner on the club veranda, and was engaged in animated tittle-tattle. She nodded and smiled at Carrington.

Norah was playing tennis. She waved her racket at the new arrival. Carrington was her beau-ideal.

He hurried into the dressing-room and shortly returned in his golf flannels. He was a sturdy chap, not at all handsome, but possessing a countenance full of strong lines. He inspired your trust and confidence, which is far better than inspiring your admiration.

"I am not going to play to-day," said Kate, "so I'll follow over the course and watch you play. I haven't seen you for a whole week; and I can't talk and play, too," smiling.

"Forward, then!" cried Carrington, beckoning to his caddy.

He played a nervous, fidgety game that

afternoon. Every time he teed his ball the document spoke from his pocket with an ominous crackle. There was not one brilliant stroke to his credit. This puzzled the girl, for only the previous week he had been runner-up in the annual tournament for crack amateurs. He made the ninth hole indifferently, then turned to the girl, smiling whimsically.

"You are not playing up to your form to-day, John," she observed.

"I admit it," he replied, tossing his club to the caddy, who, well versed in worldly affairs, serenely shouldered the bag and made off toward the club house. "My heart isn't in the game, Kate. The fact is, I'm in a peck of trouble." He determined to tell her at once. There might not be another opportunity like this.

"Why, John!" reproachfully.

"Oh, it came only yesterday. I haven't

been hiding it. I'm in a kind of pocket, and can't exactly see my way out. I want your advice; and you must be the jury and judge rolled into one."

They were standing on a hill, and far away they could see the pale line where the shimmering summer sea met the turquoise bowl of heaven.

"Tell me what your difficulty is, John, and I will judge it the best I know how."

He never knew what a simple, beautiful name John was till it fell from the lips of this girl. Many called him Jack; but only his mother and this girl called him John. He motioned toward the sandbox, and they sat down. The other players were well scattered about, out of hearing. He made out his case skilfully enough, giving his plaintiff and defendant fictitious names. The thing grew so real to him, as he went on, that toward

the end he rose to the dramatics. The girl listened, but with never a glance at him. Rather her gaze roved over the dancing gray waters and followed the lonely white sail that stood out to sea. And when he reached the climax, silence of some duration fell upon them.

"Should this man be punished?" he asked at length.

"He is guilty; he has broken two laws, the civic and human. Oh, the poor people!" pathetically. "They are never at peace; the wolf harries them, and the jackal; they are robbed, beaten and spurned. They are like sheep, not knowing how to fight. They arrest a man for his poverty; they applaud him for his greed. It is all very wrong."

The sail fell under the shadow of a cloud, and they both watched it till it flashed into the sunlight again.

"A woman's intuition is sometimes abnormally keen. You are strong enough to fight such things without the advice of a woman. Is there not something vital to me in all this? Is it not . . . is it not my father, John?"

II

CARRINGTON faced her swiftly. He had not expected this. There was something in her handsome eyes that barred the way to subterfuge. The lie died unspoken, and he dropped his gaze and began to dig up the turf with the toe of his shoe.

"Is it my father, John?"

"Yes. Oh, Kate," with a despairing gesture, "I'm the most miserable fellow alive! To think that this should fall into my hands, of all hands in the world!"

"Perhaps it is better so," quietly. "Nothing is without purpose. It might have come to test your honesty. But you are sure, John; it is not guess-work?"

"All the evidence is in my pocket. Say

the word, and the wind shall carry it down to the sea. Say the word, heart o' mine!"

He made a quick movement toward his pocket, but she caught his arm.

"Do nothing foolish or hasty, John. Tearing up the evidence would not undo what is done. Sooner or later murder will out. If my father is culpable, if in his thoughtless greed for money he has robbed the poor, he must be made to restore what he has taken. I know my father; what he has done appears perfectly legitimate to him. Can he be put in prison?"

"It all depends upon how well he defends himself," evasively.

She went on. "I have been dreading something like this; so it is no great surprise to me. He is money-mad, money-mad; and he hears, sees, thinks nothing

but money. But it hurts, John; I am a proud woman. My grandfather . . ." Her lips shut suddenly. "Money!" with a passionate wave of the hand. "How I hate the name of it, the sound of it, the thought of it! I love my father," with a defiant pride; "he has always been tender and kind to me; and I should not be of his flesh and blood had I not the desire to shield and protect him."

"The remedy is simple and close at hand," suggested Carrington gently.

"Simple, but worthy of neither of us. I abhor anything that is not wholly honest. It is one of those strange freaks of nature (who holds herself accountable to no one) to give to me honesty that is the sum total of what should have been evenly distributed among my ancestors. If I were to tell all I know, all I have kept locked in my heart . . ."

"Don't do it, girl; it wouldn't matter in the least. You are you; and that is all there is to love. Why, I could not love you less if your great-great-grandfather was a pirate," lightly. "Love asks no questions; and ancestors worry me not at all; they are all comfortably dead."

"Not always. But if my perception of honor were less keen, I should laugh at what you call your evidence."

"Laugh?"

"Yes, indeed. I very well understand the tremendous power of money."

"Not more than I," sadly.

She laughed brokenly. "More than you. I can picture to you just what will happen." She rose. "There will, of course, be a great newspaper clamor; the interstate commissioners will put their heads together; there will be investigations by the government. That will be

the attack. The keenest lawyers are on the side of corporations; that is because the state is niggard with her pay. Let me outline the defense. Father will resign from his high office, to be reëlected later when the public cools off! A new directorate will fill the place of the present one. Suddenly falsified entries will be discovered; the head bookkeeper will have disappeared. All fingers will point to him. He will be in South America, having been paid several thousand to go there. All this will make the passing of the dividend perfectly logical. The matter will never be tried in court. Money will do all this."

"My dear little woman, you reason like Pythagoras; but," Carrington added gravely, "when I undertook to untangle this affair, I realized its huge proportions. For every redoubt your father has, I have an assault, for every wall a catapult, for

every gate a petard. But, as I said before, you have only to say the word, and for the present nobody will be any the wiser."

"If I permitted you to do this, I should destroy my faith in both of us. It would erect a barrier which would be insurmountable. That is not the way out."

"I have weighed all these things," discouragedly.

He took the document from his pocket and caught it in a way that indicated how easily it might be ripped into halves, the halves into quarters, the quarters into infinitesimal squares of meaningless letters.

"Once more, shall I, Kate?"

"No, John. That would only make our difficulties greater. But I do ask this one favor; put your evidence into the hands of a strange attorney, have nothing to do with the prosecution; for my sake."

"I must have the night to think it over.

Most of my attacks are not herein written; I dared keep them only in my head."

"I am very unhappy," said the girl.

He took her hand and kissed it reverently. He longed to console her, but no words he had in mind seemed adequate.

"Fore!" came lazily over the knoll. They were no longer alone. So together they wandered slowly back to the clubhouse. Tea was being served, and Carrington drank his abstractedly. From time to time he joined the conversation, but without any heart. Some of the busier ladies whispered that it looked this time as though Kate had given the young man his *congé*.

On the way home Norah, with her humorous comment on the weekly budget of gossip, saved the situation from any possible *contretemps*. Mrs. Cavenaugh was easy-going, but for all that she pos-

sessed remarkably observant eyes; and her eldest daughter was glad that they were occupied elsewhere.

Kate was very unhappy; her father was not honest, and the man she loved had come into the knowledge of the fact. Ah, how quickly shadow can darken sunshine!

"What did you make it in to-day, Mr. Carrington?" asked Norah.

"Make what?" he counter-questioned absently.

"The course, Mr. Goose! What did you think I meant?"

"Oh," lamely, "I made a bad play at the beginning, and gave it up."

By this time they had arrived at the gates, and everybody was thankful; Mrs. Cavenaugh, because her nose smarted with sunburn; Norah, because the gown she was to wear at the dance that night

was new; Kate, because she wanted to be alone; and Carrington, because he wanted to learn whether the Angel threw Jacob or Jacob threw the Angel. The driver and the horses were glad to arrive because they were hungry.

It took the young lawyer some time to dress for dinner that night. His usually direct mind vacillated between right and wrong, wrong and right; and he floated from one to the other like an unattached cork. He made a dozen annoying blunders in dressing. And when finally the pier-glass reflected an irreproachable and finished picture, he searched his cast-off vest for his growing monster and transferred it to the pocket of his coat. Monster! Here was no story-monster, like the creature of a Frankenstein; it was genuine, and was like to turn upon him at any moment and rend him. He

shrugged and proceeded down the stairs. There are soliloquies that sometimes leave an unpleasant taste behind. So he pinned his faith to the banner of the late genial and hopeful Micawber: something might turn up for the benefit of all concerned.

The hall and living-room at the Cavenaugh manor were one and the same. There were bookcases ranging along the walls, window-seats, a reading-table and an ancient chimney-seat. As Carrington turned the first landing he stopped.

"Father, I think it positively dreadful the way you treat poor grandpa." This was Norah.

There was a crackle of a newspaper.

"Never mind, Norah, darling; your grandpa is used to it. It doesn't matter at all."

It was the sight of the last speaker that brought Carrington to a stand. Norah's

grandpa was no less a person than the shabbily dressed old man he had seen at the station that afternoon. What kind of family skeleton in the closet was he that they kept him *en camera?* He coughed and went on.

Norah was plucky, whole-hearted, frank and encouraging.

"Mr. Carrington," she said immediately, "this is my grandpa."

Carrington did not hesitate a moment, but smiled and thrust out his hand, which the other grasped with a questioning air of diffidence.

"Glad to meet you, sir," said Carrington.

Cavenaugh *fils* glanced over the top of his paper, scowled, and resumed his reading. Kate hadn't come down yet, so she missed this scene. When she did appear, there was no visible sign of any previous

agitation. She and Norah were thoroughbreds.

"Why, grandpa!" she cried, extending her hand.

The old man bowed over it and kissed it, and his action was lacking neither in grace nor gallantry.

"I happened to be down this way on business," said the old man with a covert glance at his son, "and thought I'd drop in."

"Dinner is served," said the splendid butler, as he slid back the doors to the dining-room.

The old man looked about him questioningly, and Norah slipped her arm through his. "You'll have to take me in, grandpa," she laughed.

The old man's eyes shone for a moment, and he patted her hand.

"I'm as proud as a king, Norah."

Now, Carrington could read between the lines. It was manifestly plain that grandpa was not welcome to Cavenaugh. But why? Mrs. Cavenaugh scarcely tolerated him. While the girls seldom if ever spoke of him, it was evident that both held him in their affections. There were many strange things going on in the Cavenaugh manor; and Carrington entered the dining-room in a subdued state of mind.

By degrees Norah succeeded in drawing the pariah out of himself. Carrington was soon listening to an amazing range of adventures. The old man had seen Cuba in the filibusters' time, he had fought the Canadian constabulary as a Fenian, he had been a sailor, and had touched the shores of many strange lands. Grandpa Cavenaugh was anything but illiterate. Quite often there was a flash of

wit, a well-turned phrase, a quotation. He had, besides, a comprehensive grasp of the politics of all countries.

Carrington saw at once that his half-formed opinion was a house of cards. There was no reason in the world why they should be ashamed of him, shunt him off into the side-track of obscurity, and begrudge him a plate at the table. Carrington realized that he was very close to some peculiar mystery, and that the old man's bitterest enemy was his son.

Throughout the meal the millionaire preserved a repelling silence. From time to time, when there was laughter, he scowled. Once or twice Mrs. Cavenaugh essayed to pass an observation across the table to him, but a curt nod was all she received for her pains. Presently Cavenaugh dropped his knife on his plate, and the pariah retreated meekly into his shell.

In fact, he looked frightened, as if the thought had come to him that he had made an irreparable blunder in warming under his grandchildren's smiles.

"Carrington," said Midas, balling his napkin and tossing it on the table, "your particular branch is corporation law, isn't it?"

"Yes. The firm has some reputation in that branch." Carrington glanced curiously at his host. What was coming now? Was it possible that Cavenaugh had in some way learned of his discoveries and was about to placate him?

"I believe you handled successfully the D. & M. railroad deal?"

"We won in three courts."

"Well," continued Cavenaugh, "I've been thinking of you to-day. The P. & O. counsel has had to give up on account of poor health, and Matthewson spoke to

me yesterday, asking if I knew a man who could fill his place. It pays seventeen thousand the year." He paused as if to let this magnificent salary sink into the deepest crevice of Carrington's soul. "What would you say to a permanent berth like that?" Cavenaugh positively beamed.

Kate stared at her father in astonishment. Was it possible that he was beginning to look favorably upon Carrington? Her glance traveled to Carrington. His expression she found puzzling.

"Seventeen thousand!" murmured the pariah, rubbing his hands, while his eyes sparkled.

Carrington deliberated for a space. He was hard put. He did not want to refuse this peace-offering, but nothing would make him accept it.

"This is very fine of you. Two years

ago I should have jumped at the chance. But my agreement with my partner makes it impossible. I can not honestly break my contract within five years." He waited for the storm to burst, for Cavenaugh was not a patient man.

"Are you mad?" whispered Kate. A flush of anger swept over her at the thought of Carrington's lightly casting aside this evident olive-branch.

"Would you have me accept it?" he returned, in a whisper lower than hers.

She paled. "I had forgotten," she said, with the pain of quick recollection.

The dinner came to its end, and everybody rose gratefully, for there seemed to be something tense in the air.

"Seventeen thousand honest dollars!" murmured the pariah, tagging along at the millionaire's heels.

Carrington threw him a swift penetrat-

ing glance; but the old man was looking ecstatically at the tinted angels on the ceiling. The old man might be perfectly guileless; but Carrington scented the faintly bitter aroma of irony.

Just before the carriage arrived to convey Carrington and the ladies to the club dance, grandpa appeared, hat in hand and a humble smile on his face. It was a very attractive face, weather-beaten though it was, penciled by the onset of seventy years.

"You are not going, are you, grandpa?" asked Norah.

"Yes, my child. I should be very lonesome here alone with your estimable father. I'll drop in to-morrow for Sunday dinner; that is, if you are not going to have company. I am glad that I met you, Mr. Carrington."

"Poor old grandpa!" sighed Norah,

when the door closed upon him. "He has the ridiculous idea that he isn't wanted."

Nobody pursued the subject and Norah began to preen herself.

An idea came to Carrington. He wanted to be rid of his document. He spoke to Kate, who nodded comprehensively. She led him into the dining-room. In one corner, protected by a low screen, was a small safe. This she threw open, and Carrington put the envelope into one of the pigeon-holes. The safe was absolutely empty, a fact which puzzled him not a little.

"We seldom use this," said the girl, reading the vague unspoken question in his eyes. "The jewel safe is up-stairs in my room."

"It doesn't matter in the least," he replied, smiling, "so long as I may safely rid myself of these obnoxious papers.

And if you do not mind, I'll leave them there till Monday morning. I've thought it all out, Kate. A man's only human, after all. I could never prosecute the case myself; I'd be thinking of you and the bread I have eaten. I'll turn the matter over to Challoner, and let him do as he thinks best. Of course, I shall be called as a witness when the case comes up in court, if it ever does."

She did not reply, but shut the door of the safe and rose from her knees.

The south side of the dining-room was made up of long colonial windows that opened directly upon the lawn. They were more like doors than windows. She locked each one carefully and drew the curtain.

"Norah is probably growing impatient for us," she said.

With an indescribable impulse he sud-

denly drew her into his arms and kissed her. It might be the last he could ever claim.

"John!" she murmured, gently disengaging herself.

"I love you," he said, "and I could not help it. Everything looks so dark."

The clock in the hall chimed the quarter hour after eleven. Cavenaugh was in his den. His desk was littered with sheets of paper, upon which were formidable columns of figures and dollar signs. He sat back in his chair and listened. He thought he heard a door or window close; he wasn't certain. It was probably one of the servants. He bit off the end of a fresh cigar and resumed his work. Let the young people play golf, if they wanted to, and dance and frivol away the precious hours; they would never know the joy of

seeing one become two, two become four, and so on, till the adding grew into the ransoms of many kings. Ay, this was to live. Oh, the beautiful numerals! Brigade after brigade, corps after corps, they marched at a sign from him; an army greater than that of kings. To sit in a little room, as in a puppet-booth, and juggle the policies of the nations! Yes, Kate should have a duke and Norah a prince; he would show them all some day. Recollecting Carrington, he frowned. Did the fellow know anything, that he felt the power to refuse an offer such as he had made at the dinner-table? Bah! It would be like crushing some insect. He determined that this should be Carrington's last visit. His pen moved once more, and presently he became lost in his dreams of calculation.

But Cavenaugh's ears had not deceived

him, however, for he had heard the sound of a closing window. A window had been closed, but none of the servants had been at hand.

At precisely eleven a man came swiftly but cautiously across the lawn. When he reached the long windows of the dining-room he paused, but not irresolutely. There was a sharp rasping sound, followed by the uncertain glare that makes the light of a dark-lantern separate and individual, and a window swung noiselessly inward. The room was in total darkness. The man wore a short mask, a soft felt hat well down over his eyes. He cupped his hand to his ear and strained to catch any sound. Silence. Then he dropped behind the screen, consulted a slip of paper by the light of his lantern, and with a few quick turns of the combination-knob opened the door of the safe.

He extracted the envelope and thrust it into his pocket, without so much as a glance at its contents. In making his exit, the window stuck on the sill. In pressing it the lock snapped loudly. This was the sound Cavenaugh heard. The burglar ran lightly across the lawn and disappeared beyond the hedges. And none too soon.

The Cavenaugh drag rolled over the hill and went clattering up to the porte-cochère.

On the way home Carrington, his mind still wavering between this expedient and that, decided that, after all, he would take charge of the papers himself. It didn't seem quite fair that Cavenaugh's safe should protect his ultimate disgrace. So, upon entering the house, he confided his desire to Kate, who threw aside her wraps and led him into the dining-room. She had her own reasons for wishing the pa-

pers out of the safe. She turned on the lights and swirled the combination-knob. At this moment Norah came in.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Mr. Carrington left some valuable papers in the safe, and he wants them."

Carrington wondered why Norah gazed from him to her sister with so wild an expression.

"Papers?" she murmured.

Kate opened the door. She sprang to her feet in terror and dismay.

"What is it?" cried Carrington, who saw by her expression that something extraordinary had happened.

"They . . . it is not there!"

Norah sat down and hid her face on her arms.

Carrington rushed over to the safe, stooped and made a hasty examination. It had been opened by some one who

knew the combination! He stood up, a cold chill wrinkling his spine. He saw it all distinctly. Cavenaugh knew. He had known all along. Cavenaugh had overheard him speak to Kate, and had opened the safe after their departure for the club. It was all very cleverly done. He knew that Kate was utterly blameless. Then it dawned upon him that they appeared as though they accepted the catastrophe as not wholly unexpected! To what did this labyrinth lead?

A rattle of the curtain-rings wheeled them about. They beheld Cavenaugh himself standing in the doorway.

"What's the trouble?" he asked, eying Carrington suspiciously.

Carrington answered him icily. "I left some legal documents of great value in this safe; they are no longer there."

Cavenaugh's jaw dropped. He stared

at Kate, then at Norah. If ever there was written on a face unfeigned dismay and astonishment, it was on the millionaire's. A moment before Carrington would have sworn that he was guilty; now he knew not what to believe. He grew bewildered. There had certainly been a burglar; but who was he?

"Mr. Carrington," said Cavenaugh, pulling himself together with an effort, "you need have no worry whatever. I will undertake to restore your documents. I offer you no explanations." He left them abruptly.

The young lawyer concluded to grope no longer. Somebody else would have to lead him out of this labyrinthine maze. All at once there came to him a sense of infinite relief. Providence had kindly taken the matter out of his hands.

"Never mind, Kate," he said. "For my

part, I should be entirely satisfied if I never saw the miserable thing again."

"Father will find it for you." Her eyes were dim with tears of shame.

"What is it, girl?"

"Nothing that I can explain to you, John. Good night."

When he had gone to his room, Norah turned to her sister and sobbed on her breast.

"Oh, Kate!"

"What is the matter, child?"

"I told grandpa the combination!"

III

CARRINGTON tumbled out of bed at six and threw out the old-fashioned green blinds. A warm, golden summer morning greeted his eyes, and the peaceful calm of Sunday lay upon the land. A robin piped in an apple-tree, an oriole flashed across the flower-beds, and a bee buzzed just outside the sill. A brave day! He stepped into his tub, bathed, and dressed in his riding-clothes, for there was to be a canter down to the sea and return before breakfast. From the window he could see the groom walking the beautiful thoroughbreds up and down the driveway. There were only two this morning; evidently Norah was not going.

The Cavenaugh girls had created almost a scandal and a revolution when they first appeared at Glenwood. People had read and talked about women riding like men, they had even seen pictures of them, but to find them close at hand was something of a shock. Yet, when they saw with what ease the Cavenaugh girls took the hedges, ditches and fences, how their mounts never suffered from saddle-galls, and, above all, how the two always kept even pace with the best men riders, opinion veered; and several ladies changed their habits.

Norah, who saw the droll side of things, once said that the accepted riding habit for women reminded her of a kimono for a harp.

Carrington stole gently down to the horses. He had great affection for the sleek thoroughbreds. Their ears went

forward when they saw him, and they whinnied softly. He rubbed their velvet noses and in turn they nozzled him for sugar-loaves. Had it not been for the night and the attendant mysteries, his happiness would have been complete. People waste many precious moments in useless retrospection; so Carrington resolutely forced the subject from his mind. One thing was certain, the Cavenaughs knew who the burglar was; and there was something strange in the idea of an empty safe in a millionaire's home. Pshaw! He took out the expected sugar-loaves and extended them on both palms. The pair lipped his hand and crunched the sweets with evident relish.

"How are they to-day, James?"

"Fit for twenty miles, straight away or 'cross-lots, sir. Your mount is feeling his oats this morning; he hasn't been out for

a run since Thursday, sir. I've put the curb on him in case he takes it into his head to cut up shines. Here comes Miss Kate, sir."

Carrington's pulse rose. Kate was approaching them. She was pale but serene. She smiled a good morning, which took in the gentleman and the groom.

"I hope I haven't kept you waiting."

"Not a moment; I only just got down myself," said Carrington.

She mounted without assistance and adjusted her skirts. The filly began to waltz, impatient to be off.

"To the beach?" Carrington asked, swinging into his saddle.

She nodded, and they started off toward the highway at a part trot. Once there, the animals broke into an easy canter, which they maintained for a mile or more. Then Kate drew down to a walk.

"What a day!" said he, waving his hand toward the sea-line.

There was color a-plenty on her cheeks now, and her eyes shone like precious stones. There is no exhilaration quite like it. She flicked the elders with her crop, and once or twice reached up for a ripening apple. In the air there was the strange sea-smell, mingled with the warm scent of clover.

"I'll race you to the beach!" she cried suddenly.

"Done! I'll give you to the sixth tree." He laughed. There was really nothing at all in the world but this beautiful girl, the horses, and the white road that wound in and out to the sea.

She trotted her mount to the sixth tree, turned, and then gave the signal. Away they went, the horses every bit as eager as their riders. With their ears laid back,

their nostrils wide, their feet drumming, they thundered down the road. Carrington gained, but slowly, and he had to hold his right arm as a shield for his eyes, as the filly's heels threw back a steady rain of sand and gravel. Faster and faster; a milk-wagon veered out just in time; foolish chickens scampered to the wrong side of the road, and the stray pigs in the orchards squealed and bolted inland. It was all very fine. And when they struck deep tawny sand the animals were neck and neck. It was now no easy task to bring them to a stop. Carrington's hunter had made up his mind to win, and the lithe filly was equally determined. As an expedient, they finally guided the animals toward the hull of an ancient wreck; nothing else would have stopped them.

"How I love it!" said Kate breathlessly, as she slid from the saddle. "Beauty, you

beat him, didn't you!" patting the dripping neck of her favorite.

They tethered the horses presently, and sat down in the shade of the hull.

"Nothing like it, is there, girl?"

"I hate automobiles," she answered irrelevantly.

The old, old sea quarreled murmurously at their feet, and the white gulls sailed hither and thither, sometimes breasting the rollers just as they were about to topple over into running creamy foam. The man and the girl seemed perfectly content to remain voiceless. There was no sound but the song of the sea: the girl dreamed, and the man wondered what her dream was. Presently he glanced at his watch. He stood up, brushing the sand from his clothes.

"Half an hour between us and breakfast, Kate. All aboard!"

The night before might have been only an idle dream.

So they took the road back. Only the sea and the gulls saw the tender kiss.

The pariah sauntered in at two o'clock that afternoon, just as the family were sitting down to luncheon. He was a revelation. There was nothing shabby about him now. He wore a new suit, spats, a new straw hat, and twirled a light bamboo. There was something jaunty and confident in his air, a bubbling in his eyes; altogether, he was in fine fettle about something. He cast aside his hat and cane with a flourish.

"Aha! just in time," he said. "Another chair, William."

The butler sent a dubious glance at his master; there was the usual curt nod and the frown. So grandpa sat down beside

Norah, whose usual effervescence had strangely subsided; he pinched her cheek, and deliberated between the cold ham and chicken.

"A fine day! A beautiful day! A day of days!" he cried, surrendering to the appetitious lure of both meats.

Nobody replied to this outburst of exuberance; nobody had the power to. A strange calm settled over every one. This was altogether a new kind of grandpa. There was nothing timid or hesitant here, nothing meek and humble; neither was there that insufferable self-assurance and arrogance of a disagreeable man. Grandpa's attitude was simply that of an equal, of a man of the world, of one who is confident of the power he holds in reserve; that was all. But for all that, he was a sensation of some magnitude. Carrington was seized with a wild desire to laugh.

The truth came to him like an illumination; but he wisely held his peace.

"There is something in the air to-day that renews youth in old age; eh, my son?" with a sly wink at Cavenaugh.

Cavenaugh's expression of wonder began to freeze and remained frozen to the end of the meal. So all the honors of conversation fell to grandpa, who seemed to relish this new privilege.

"Father," said Cavenaugh, holding back his accumulated wrath, "I want to see you in my study."

"Immediately, my son. I was just about to make that same request." Grandpa looked at Kate, then at Carrington. "I suppose you young persons will invite poor old grandpa to the wedding?"

"Father!" This was altogether too much for patrician blood. Cavenaugh's face reddened and his fists closed omi-

nously. "You will do me the honor, father, not to meddle with my private affairs. Kate is my daughter, and she shall marry the man it pleases me to accept."

Carrington felt this cut dart over grandpa's shoulder. He stirred uneasily.

"Oh, if that's the way you look at it!" with a comical deprecatory shrug. Grandpa touched Carrington on the arm. "Young man, do you love this girl? No false modesty, now; the truth, and nothing but the truth. Do you love her?"

"With all my heart!" Carrington felt the impulse occult. Something whispered that his whole future depended upon his answer.

"And you, Kate?"

"I love him, grandpa," bravely.

"That's all I want to know," said grandpa.

Cavenaugh released one of his fists; it

fell upon the table and rattled things generally.

"Am I in my own house?" he bawled.

"That depends," answered grandpa suavely. "You've got to behave yourself. Now, then, let us repair to the secret chamber of finance. It is the day of settlement," grimly.

Mrs. Cavenaugh was gently weeping. The dread moment had come, come when she had been lulled into the belief that it would never come. Kate understood, and longed to go to her and comfort her; and she trembled for her father, who knew nothing of the pit that lay at his feet. Carrington dallied with his fork; he wished he was anywhere in the world but at the Cavenaugh table. The desire to laugh recurred to him, but he realized that the inclination was only hysterical.

Cavenaugh was already heading for the

study. He was in a fine rage. Grandpa was close on his heels. At the threshold he turned once more to Carrington.

"You know your *Tempest,* young man, I'm sure," he said. "Well, this is the revolt of Caliban—Caliban uplifted, as it were."

The door closed behind them, and father and son faced each other.

"I'll trouble you for those papers you took from the safe last night," said the son heavily.

"Ah, indeed!" said grandpa.

"At once; I have reached the limit of my patience."

"So have I," returned grandpa. "Perhaps you know what these papers are about?"

"I know nothing whatever, save that they belong to Mr. Carrington. Hand them over."

Grandpa helped himself to a cigar and sat down. He puffed two or three times, eyed the lighted end, and sighed with satisfaction.

"If you but knew what they were about, these papers, you would pay a cool million for their possession. My word, it is a droll situation; reads like the fourth act in a play. If you have a duke picked out for Kate, forget him."

"She will never marry Carrington!" Cavenaugh's voice rose in spite of his effort to control it.

"My son, they will hear you," the pariah warned. He blew a cloud of smoke into the air and sniffed it. "You never offered me this particular brand," reproachfully.

"Enjoy it," snapped the other, "for it is the last you will ever smoke in any house of mine."

"You don't tell me!"

"Those papers, instantly!"

"'Be it known by these presents, et cetera, et cetera,'" said the old man. He rose suddenly, the banter leaving his lips and eyes, and his jaw setting hard. "You had better get your check-book handy, my son, for when I'm through with you, you'll be only too glad to fill out a blank for fifty thousand. I consider myself quite moderate. This young Carrington is a mighty shrewd fellow; and I'd rather have him as a friend than an enemy. He has made out his case so strongly that it will cost you a pretty penny to escape with a whole skin."

"What are you talking about?"

"The case of the people versus Cavenaugh et al. It concerns the clever way in which you and your partners slid under the seven per cent. dividend due your

investors; which caused a slump in the price of the shares, forcing thousands to sell their stock; which you bought back at a handsome profit. Moloch! The millions you have are not enough; you must have more. There are about twelve of you in all, not one of you worth less than three millions. What a beautiful chance for blackmail!"

Cavenaugh stepped back, and his legs, striking a chair, toppled him into it. His father had become Medusa's head!

"Aha! That jars you some," chuckled grandpa.

It took Cavenaugh some time to recover his voice, and when he did it was faint and unnatural.

"Is this true?" he gasped.

"It is so true that I'll trouble you for the check now."

"Come, father, this is no time for non-

sense." Cavenaugh waved his hand impatiently. "Let me see the document."

"Hardly. But the moment you place the check in my hands, I shall be pleased to do so. But there must be no reservation to have payment stopped."

"I will not give you a single penny!" The mere suggestion of giving up so large a sum without a struggle seemed preposterous. "Not a penny! And furthermore, I am through with you for good and all. Shift for yourself hereafter. Fifty thousand! You make me laugh!"

"I shall make you laugh, my son; but not on the humorous side." The old man reached out his hand and struck the bell.

"What do you want?" asked Cavenaugh, mystified.

"I want the author of the document. I propose to take the family skeleton out of

the closet and dangle it up and down before the young man's eyes. You will laugh, I dare say."

Cavenaugh fell back in his chair again. The door opened and William looked in.

"You rang, sir?" to Cavenaugh *fils*.

"No, William," said Cavenaugh *père* affably; "I rang. Call Mr. Carrington." The butler disappeared. "It is my turn, Henry, and I have waited a long time, as you very well know. Ha! Sit down, Mr. Carrington, sit down."

Carrington, who had entered, obeyed readily.

"You left some papers in the dining-room safe last night," began grandpa.

"I was about to ask you to return them," replied Carrington, with assumed pleasantry.

The two Cavenaughs looked at each other blankly. Finally grandpa laughed.

"I told you he was clever!"

"It is true, then," snarled the millionaire, "that you have been meddling with affairs that in no wise concern you. I warn you that your case in court will not have a leg to stand on."

"I prefer not to discuss the merits of the case," said Carrington quietly.

"I have been your host, sir; you have eaten at my table." Cavenaugh, as he spoke, was not without a certain dignity.

"All of which, recognizing the present situation, I profoundly regret."

"Good!" said grandpa. "Henry, if you had been the general they give you credit for, you would have offered Mr. Carrington that seventeen thousand two or three years ago. There is nothing so menacing to dishonesty as the free lance. Now, listen to me for a space. We'll come to the documentary evidence all in good time.

I spoke of Caliban uplifted," ironically. "For years I have been treated as a pariah, as a beast of burden, as a messenger boy, as a go-between to take tricks that might have soiled my son's delicate hands. Father and son, yes; but in name only. Blood is thicker than water only when riches and ambition are not touched in the quick. This dutiful son of mine could easily have elevated me along with himself; but he would not do so. He was afraid that people might learn something of my past, which would greatly hinder his advancement. He prospered, he grew rich and arrogant; he put his heel on my neck, and I dared not revolt. You wouldn't believe it, would you, Mr. Carrington, that I was graduated with honors from Oxford University. I speak three tongues fluently, and have a smattering of a dozen others; am a doctor of

philosophy, an Egyptologist. But I was indolent and loved good times, and so, you see, it came about that I fell into evil ways. Formerly, I was a burglar by profession."

He stopped, eying Carrington's stupefaction. The son gnawed his lips impotently.

"I was a master, after a fashion," resumed the old man, satisfied with his dénouement. "I committed a dozen splendid burglaries. I never left a trail behind. The police sought for me, but did not know me either by name or by sight. This was the sword my son kept over my neck. The slightest rebellion, and he threatened to expose me. Oh, I know the boy well enough; he would have done it in those days. Once extradited to England, thirty years ago, no one would have connected our names. Yet he was afraid

of me; he wasn't sure that at any time the old desire would spring up renewed. I robbed to gratify my craving for excitement rather than to fill my purse. I made an unhappy marriage; something Kate nor Norah shall do while I live. Henry was clever. He made me an allowance of two hundred a month. And how do you suppose he arranged the payment? On the first day of the month he placed the cash in a safe in the house, and changed the combination. If I got the money without being caught it was mine; otherwise I went hungry. Ingenious idea, wasn't it? For I had all the excitement, and none of the peril of a real burglary. Henry forgot, yesterday, that it was the first of the month."

The millionaire found it impossible to remain seated. He rose and paced the floor, his brows knit, his hands clenched.

He was at bay. Carrington felt as if he were in the midst of some mad dream.

"Sometimes I succeeded in opening the safe; and sometimes, when luck went against me for two or three months, Norah tipped me the combination. She dared not do it too often. So the months went on. Once a month I was permitted to visit my grandchildren. My son grew richer and richer; for myself, I remained in the valley of humiliation. I had no chance. I had never met any of my son's friends; he took good care that I did not; so they were in total darkness as to my existence. But the ball and chain were knocked off last night. Your papers are, after all, only an incident. Caliban revolts. Mr. Carrington, my son! Oh, I am proud of him. I believed the genius for robbery was mine. I am a veritable tyro beside Henry. Half a dozen mil-

lions from the pockets of the poor at one fell swoop! Where's your Robin Hood and his ilk? But it isn't called robbery; it is called high finance."

He applied a match to his dead cigar and thoughtfully eyed his son.

"And there is a good joke on me, weaving in and out of all this. I regularly invested half my allowance in buying shares in my son's company, to insure my old age. It jarred me when I read the truth last night. I hate to be outwitted. Henry, sit down; you make me nervous."

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked the son. As he faced his father there was something lion-like in his expression.

"Sit down, my son, and I will tell you," answered the old man quietly. He knew that his son was a fighter, and that to win he would have to strike quick and hard.

Cavenaugh flung himself into his chair. At that moment he did not know which he hated the most, his father or Carrington.

"First, you will write out that check for fifty thousand."

"Blackmail!"

"Nothing of the sort. For twenty years you have kept your heel on my neck. I could do nothing; opportunities came and I dared not grasp them; my genuine ability was allowed to rust. It is simply compensation. Blackmail? I think not. I could easily force a million from you. But I am and have been for years an honest man. And heaven knows how well I have paid for my early transgression," bitterly. "This hour is mine, and I propose to use it."

"What guaranty have I of your good faith?" fiercely.

"My word," calmly. "I have never yet broken it."

Carrington gazed longingly toward the door. It was horribly embarrassing. He began to realize that Kate's father would hate him bitterly indeed, and that his own happiness looked very remote.

Cavenaugh turned to his desk, filled out the blank, and passed it to his father, who, with scarcely a glance at it, passed it back with a negative shake of the head.

"The official certifying stamp lies on your desk; use it."

There was no getting around this keen-eyed old man. He knew every point in the game.

"You will live to regret this," said Cavenaugh, his eyes sparkling with venom.

"I have many things to regret; principally that fate made me a father." The

old man passed the check over to Carrington. "You're a lawyer; does that look legal to you?"

Carrington signified that it did.

"Now, then, Henry, you will write down on official paper your resignation as president and director of the General Trust Company of America. You will give orders for the restitution of the millions that were fraudulently added to your capital. I am not the least interested in what manner the restitutions are made, so long as they are made. I am now representing the investors. As for your partners, it will be easy for you to impress them with the necessity of the action."

"And if I refuse?"

"Nothing less than the attorney-general. I intend to make this business as complete as possible."

Cavenaugh turned again to his desk.

He knew his father even as his father knew him. He wrote hurriedly, the pen sputtering angrily.

"What else?" with a cold fury.

Again the old man gave Carrington the paper.

"It is perfectly intelligible," he said. He began to feel a bit sorry for Cavenaugh junior.

"Now, those papers," said Cavenaugh sharply.

"I believe they belong to me," interposed Carrington.

Grandpa smiled. "It all depends."

"I could easily force you," suggestively.

Grandpa smiled again. "Of that I haven't the least doubt. Of course, what I have is only a copy?"

"It is the only copy in existence," replied Carrington anxiously. And then a

flush of shame mantled his cheeks. Where was his legal cunning?

"Ah!" The ejaculation came from Cavenaugh junior.

"There is but one thing more," said grandpa urbanely. "I am determined that Kate shall be happy. She shall marry Mr. Carrington before the snow flies. It is an excellent policy to keep valuable secrets in the family."

"Give your papers to the attorney-general. I'll see you all hanged before I'll give my consent!" Cavenaugh roared out these words. His patience had truly reached the limit of endurance.

"Softly, softly!" murmured grandpa.

"I mean it!" *con agitata.*

"Ah, well; what will be, will be. Son, I came down here yesterday with altogether a different piece of business in mind. The documents I discovered last

night changed these plans. You own rich oil lands in Texas; or, rather, you did own them before you sold out to the company. The land you sold was not, and never had been, legally yours; you owned not a single tuft of grass. Government land-grab, I believe they call it. It is not now a question of refunding money; it is a question of avoiding prison. The supreme court at Washington can not be purchased. It cost me five hundred, which I could ill afford, to get a copy of the original transfer. The real owner mistook me for you, son; that is how I learned. Your consent to this marriage; or, my word for it, I'll put you where you would have put me, had you dared. Quick! My patience is quite as tense as yours."

The collapse of Cavenaugh was total. He saw the futility of further struggle.

Ah! and he had believed all these transgressions securely hidden and forgotten, that the fortress of his millions would protect him from all attack. Too late he realized that he had gone too far with his father. There was no mercy in the old man's eyes, and Cavenaugh knew in his heart that he deserved none.

"Very sensible," said the retired burglar. He folded the check and put it in his wallet, while his son covered his face with his hands. "Murder will out, even among the most pious. I know that what has passed between us will be forgotten by Mr. Carrington. For myself, I shall return to England. I have always had a horror of dying in this country. Like father, like son; the parable reads truly. It was in the blood, Mr. Carrington; it was in the blood. But Henry here went about it in a more genteel manner." He

struck the bell. "William, send Miss Kate here."

William bowed. He recognized the change; grandpa's voice was full of confident authority.

Kate entered the study shortly after. She had been weeping; her eyes were red. Seeing her father's bowed head, she sprang to his side like a lioness.

"What have they been doing to you, father?"

"Nothing but what is just," softly answered her parent. The little dukes and princes faded away as a dream fades.

"Grandpa . . . " she began.

"Child, it is all settled. The hatchet is buried in frozen ground. Your father consents to your marriage with Mr. Carrington. It has been a heated argument, but he has come around to my way of thinking. 'All's right with the world,' as

Browning says. Bless you, my children, bless you!" with tender irony.

"And now, my papers," said Carrington, smiling up at the girl reassuringly.

"And you still wish to marry me?" asked the girl, her face burning and her eyes moist.

"I'd marry you if your grandpa was Beelzebub himself!"

"Here's your papers, young man," said grandpa. He passed the envelope across the table.

"What's this?" cried Carrington.

"It means, my boy," said grandpa, "that blood is thicker than water, and that I really intended no harm to Henry. And then, besides, I like to win when all the odds are against me."

Carrington gently turned the envelope upside down. Nothing but burnt paper fluttered upon the table.

TWO CANDIDATES

I

TO begin with, I am going to call things by their real names. At first glance this statement will give you a shiver of terror, that is, if you happen to be a maiden lady or a gentleman with reversible cuffs. But your shivers will be without reason. Prue may read, and modest Prue's mama; for it isn't going to be a naughty story; on the contrary, grandma's spring medicines are less harmless. Yet there is a parable to expound and a moral to point out; but I

shall leave these to your own discernment.

It has always appealed to me as rather a silly custom on a story-teller's part to invent names for the two great political parties of the United States; and for my part, I am going to call a Democrat a Democrat and a Republican a Republican, because these titles are not so hallowed in our time as to be disguised in print and uttered in a bated breath. There is fortunately no *lèse-majesté* in America.

Men inclined toward the evil side of power will be found in all parties, and always have been. Unlike society, the middle class in politics usually contains all the evil elements. In politics the citizen becomes the lowest order, and the statesman the highest; and, thanks to the common sense of the race, these are large-

ly honest and incorruptible. When these become disintegrated, a republic falls.

Being a journalist and a philosopher, I look upon both parties with tolerant contempt. The very nearness of some things disillusions us; and I have found that only one illusion remains to the newspaper man, and that is that some day he'll get out of the newspaper business. I vote as I please, though the family does not know this. The mother is a Republican and so is the grandmother; and, loving peace in the house, I dub myself a Republican till that moment when I enter the voting-booth. Then I become an individual who votes as his common-sense directs.

The influence of woman in politics is no inconsiderable matter. The great statesman may flatter himself that his greatness is due to his oratorical powers;

but his destiny is often decided at the breakfast-table. Why four-fifths of the women lean toward Republicanism is something no mere historian can analyze.

In my town politics had an evil odor. For six years a Democrat had been mayor, and for six years the town had been plundered. For six years the Republicans had striven, with might and main, to regain the power . . . and the right to plunder. It did not matter which party ruled, graft (let us omit the quotation marks) was the tocsin. The citizens were robbed, openly or covertly, according to the policy of the party in office. There was no independent paper in town; so, from one month's end to another it was leaded editorial vituperation. Then Caliban revolted. An independent party was about to be formed.

The two bosses, however, were equal to

the occasion. They immediately hustled around and secured as candidates for the mayoralty two prominent young men whose honesty and integrity were unimpeachable. Caliban, as is his habit, sheathed his sword and went back to his bench, his desk, or whatever his occupation was.

On the Republican side they nominated a rich young club-man. Now, as you will readily agree, it is always written large on the political banner that a man who is rich has no incentive to become a grafter. The public is ever willing to trust its funds to a millionaire. The Democrats, with equal cunning, brought forward a brilliant young attorney, whose income was rather moderate but whose ability and promise were great. The Democratic organs hailed his nomination with delight.

"We want one of the people to represent us, not one of the privileged class." You see, there happened to be no rich young Democrat available.

These two candidates were close personal friends. They had been chums from boyhood and had been graduated from the same college. They belonged to the same clubs, and were acknowledged to be the best horsemen in town. As to social prominence, neither had any advantage over the other, save in the eyes of matrons who possessed marriageable (and extravagant) daughters. Williard, the Republican nominee, was a handsome chap, liberal-minded and generous-hearted, without a personal enemy in the world. I recollect only one fault: he loved the world a little too well. The opposition organs, during the heat of the campaign, dropped vague hints regarding dinners to

singers and actresses and large stakes in poker games. Newcomb, his opponent, was not handsome, but he had a fine, clean-cut, manly face, an intrepid eye, a resolute mouth, and a tremendous ambition. He lived well within his income, the highest recommendation that may be paid to a young man of these days.

He threw himself into the fight with all the ardor of which his nature was capable; whereas Williard was content to let the machine direct his movements. The truth is, Williard was indifferent whether he became mayor or not. To him the conflict was a diversion, a new fish to Lucullus; and when the Democratic organs wrote scathing editorials about what they termed his profligate career, he would laugh and exhibit the articles at the club. It was all a huge joke. He made very few speeches, and at

no time could he be forced into the foreign districts. He complained that his olfactory nerve was too delicately educated. The leaders swallowed their rancor; there was nothing else for them to do. In Williard's very lack of ambition lay his strength. Poverty would have made a great man out of him; but riches have a peculiar way of numbing the appreciation of the greater and simpler things in life.

Newcomb went everywhere; the Poles hurrahed for him, the Germans, the Irish, the Huns and the Italians. And he made no promises which he did not honestly intend to fulfil. To him the fight meant everything; it meant fame and honor, a comfortable addition to his income, and Washington as a finality. He would purify the Democrats while he annihilated the pretensions of the Republicans. He

was what historians call an active dreamer, a man who dreams and then goes forth to accomplish things. His personality was engaging.

Besides all this (for the secret must be told) Newcomb was in love and wished to have all these things to lay at the feet of his beloved, even if she returned them. You will regularly find it to be true that the single man is far more ambitious than his married brother. The latter invariably turns over the contract to his wife.

Williard was deeply in love, too, with Senator Gordon's lovely daughter, and Senator Gordon was that mysterious power which directed the Republican forces in his section of the state. So you may readily believe that Newcomb was forced to put up a better fight than Williard, who stood high in Senator Gordon's favor. The girl and the two young

men had been friends since childhood, and nobody knew whether she cared for either of them in the way they desired. Everybody in town, who was anybody, understood the situation; and everybody felt confident that Williard was most likely to win. The girl never said anything, even to her intimate friends; but when the subject was brought up, she smiled in a way that dismissed it.

Such was the political situation at the beginning of the municipal campaign. There have been like situations in any number of cities which boast of one hundred thousand inhabitants or more; perhaps in your town, and yours, and yours. That bugaboo of the politician, reform, brings around this phenomenon about once in every eight years. For a while the wicked ones promise to be good, and you will admit that that helps.

It was amusing to follow the newspapers. They vilified each other, ripped to shreds the character of each candidate, recalled boyhood escapades and magnified them into frightful crimes, and declared in turn that the opposition boss should land in the penitentiary if it took all the type in the composing-rooms to do it. What always strikes me as odd is that, laughter-loving people that we are, nobody laughs during these foolish periods. Instead, everybody goes about, straining his conscience and warping his common-sense into believing these flimsy campaign lies, these outrageous political roorbacks.

When Williard and Newcomb met at the club, at the Saturday-night luncheons, they avoided each other tactfully, each secretly longing to grasp the other's hand and say: "Don't believe a word of it, old

boy; it's all tommy-rot." But policy held them at arm's length. What would the voters say if they heard that their respective candidates were hobnobbing at a private club? Newcomb played billiards in the basement while Williard played a rubber at whist up stairs; and the Saturday rides out to the country club became obsolete. Only a few cynics saw the droll side of the situation; and they were confident that when the election was over the friendship would be renewed all the more strongly for the tension.

One night, some weeks before the election, Williard dined alone with the senator at the Gordon home. Betty Gordon was dining elsewhere. With the cognac and cigars, the senator drew out a slip of paper, scrutinized it for a space, then handed it to his protégé.

"That's the slate. How do you like it?"

Williard ran his glance up and down the columns. Once he frowned.

"What's the matter?" asked the senator shrewdly.

"I do not like the idea of Matthews for commissioner of public works. He's a blackleg—there's no getting around that. He practically runs that faro-bank above his down-town saloon. Can't you put some one else in his place?"

The senator flipped the ash from the end of his cigar.

"Honestly, my boy, I agree with your objection; but the word is given, and if we turn him down now, your friend Newcomb will stand a pretty fair show of being the next mayor."

"You might get a worse one," Williard laughed. "Jack is one of the finest fellows in the world," loyally.

"Not a bit of doubt; but politically,"

said the senator, laughing, "he is a rascal, a man without a particle of character, and all that. But personally speaking, I would that this town had more like him. Win or lose, he will always be welcome in this house. But this Matthews matter; you will have to swallow him or be swallowed."

"He's a rascal."

"Perhaps he is. Once you are elected, however, you can force him out, and be hanged to him. Just now it would be extremely dangerous. My boy, politics has strange bed-fellows, as the saying goes. These men are necessary; to fight them is to cut your own throat. No one knows just how they get their power; but one morning you will wake up and find them menacing you, and you have to placate them and toss them sops."

"I might at least have been consulted."

"I appreciated your antagonism beforehand. Politics is a peculiar business. A man must form about himself a shell as thick as a turtle's, or his feelings are going to be hurt. Now, if you would like to change any of these smaller offices, the health department doesn't matter. What do you say?"

"Oh, if Matthews remains on the slate, I do not care to alter the rest of it. But I warn you that I shall get rid of him at the earliest opportunity."

"Just as you like."

The senator smiled covertly. Matthews was one of his henchmen in the larger matters of state. His name had been the first to appear on the slate, and the senator was determined that it should remain there. Not that he had any liking for the man; simply he was one of the wheels which made the machine run smoothly.

The senator knew his power of persuasion; he knew Williard's easy-going nature; but he also knew that these easy-going persons are terribly stubborn at times. He was obliged to hold on to Matthews. The gubernatorial campaign was looming up for the ensuing year, and the senator was curious to learn the real power that went with the seal of a governor of a first-class state.

There fell an intermission to the conversation. Williard smoked thoughtfully. He recalled the years during which he had accepted the generous hospitality of this house, and the love he held for the host's daughter. Only since his return from abroad had he learned the strength of his sentiment. Heretofore he had looked upon the girl as a sister, jolly, talented, a fine dancer, a daring rider, a good comrade. He had been out of the

country for three years. On his return he had found Betty Gordon a beautiful woman, and he had silently surrendered. As yet he had said nothing, but he knew that she knew. Yet he always saw the shadow of Newcomb, old Jack Newcomb. Well, let the best man win!

"I can find a way to dispose of Matthews," he said finally.

"I dare say."

But Williard did not know the tenacity with which some men cling to office. The senator did.

Here the servant ushered in two lieutenants of the senator's. One was an ex-consul and the other was the surveyor of customs, who was not supposed to dabble in local politics.

"Everything is agreeable to Mr. Williard," the senator answered in reply to the questioning look of his subordinates.

"He vows, however, that he will shake Matthews as soon as he can get the chance."

The new arrivals laughed.

"We'll put you through, young man," said the ex-consul; "and one of these fine days we shall send you to France. That's the place for a man of your wit and wealth."

Williard smiled and lighted a fresh cigar. He did possess the reputation of being a clever wit, and in his secret heart he would much prefer a consulate or a secretaryship at the French embassy. He thoroughly detested this indiscriminate hand-shaking which went with local politics.

But Matthews stuck in his gorge, and he wondered if Newcomb was going through any like ordeal, and if Newcomb would submit so readily. . . . Why

the deuce didn't Betty return? It was almost nine o'clock.

Presently her sunny countenance appeared in the doorway, and Williard dropped his cigar joyfully and rose. It was worth all the politics in the world!

"Gentlemen, you will excuse me," he said.

"Go along!" the senator cried jovially. "We can spare you."

As indeed they very well could!

In a minute Williard was in the music-room.

"I really do not know that I ought to shake hands with you, Dick," began Betty, tossing her hat on the piano. "You have deceived me for years."

"Deceived you! What do you mean?" mightily disturbed.

"Wait a moment." She brought forth a paper. "Sit down in front of me. This is

going to be a court of inquiry, and your sins shall be passed in review." He obeyed meekly. "Now listen," the girl went on, mischief in her eyes; "this paper says horrid things about you. It claims that you have given riotous dinners to actresses and comic-opera singers. I classify them because I do not think comic-opera singers are actresses."

"Rot!" said Williard, crossing his legs and eying with pleasure the contours of her face. "Jolly rot!"

"You mustn't say 'jolly' in this country; it's English, and they'll be accusing you of it."

"Well, bally rot; how will that go?"

"That isn't very pretty, but it will pass. Now, to proceed. They say that your private life is profligate."

"Oh, come now, Betty!" laughing diffidently.

"They say that you gamble at poker and win and lose huge sums."

"Your father plays poker in Washington; I've seen him."

"He's not on trial; *you* are. Furthermore," went on the girl, the twinkle going from her eye, leaving it searching yet unfathomable, "this editor says that you are only a dummy in this game of politics, and that once you are mayor, your signature will be all that will be required of you. That is to say, you will be nothing but a puppet in the hands of the men who brought about your election."

Williard thought of Matthews, and the smile on his lips died.

"Now, Dick, this paper says that it seeks only the truth of things, and admits that you possess certain engaging qualities. What am I to believe?"

"Betty, you know very well that they'll

have me robbing widows before election." He was growing restless. He felt that this trial wasn't all play. "If you don't mind, I'd rather talk of something else. Politics, politics, morning, noon and night until my ears ache!"

"Or burn," suggested the girl. "The things they say about your private life—I don't care for them. I know that they are not truths. But the word 'puppet' annoys me." She laid aside the paper.

"Have I ever acted like a dummy, Betty? In justice to me, have I?" He was serious.

"Not in ordinary things."

"No one has ever heard that I broke a promise."

"No."

"Or that I was cowardly."

"No, no!"

"Well, if I am elected, I shall fool cer-

tain persons. I am easy-going; I confess to that impeachment; but I have never been crossed successfully."

"They'll know how to accomplish their ends without crossing you. That's a part of the politician's business."

"If I am elected, I'll study ways and means. Hang it, I wasn't running after office. They said that they needed me. As a property owner I had to surrender. I am not a hypocrite; I never was. I can't go honestly among the lower classes and tell them that I like them, shake their grimy hands, hobnob with them at caucuses and in gloomy halls. I am not a politician; my father was not before me; it isn't in my blood. I haven't the necessary ambition. Newcomb's grandfather was a war governor; mine was a planter in the South. Now, Newcomb has ambition enough to carry him to the presi-

dency; and I hope he'll get it some day, and make an ambassador out of me. Sometimes I wish I wasn't rich, so that I might enjoy life as some persons do. To have something to fight for constantly! I am spoiled."

He wheeled his chair toward the fire and rested his elbows on his knees.

"He's very handsome," thought the girl; but she sighed.

II

THAT same evening Newcomb and McDermott, the Democratic leader, met by appointment in McDermott's law offices. McDermott was a wealthy steel-manufacturer who had held various state and national offices. As a business man his policy was absolute honesty. He gave liberal wages, met his men personally, and adjusted their differences. There were as many Republicans as Democrats in his employ. Politics never entered the shop. Every dollar in his business had been honestly earned. He was a born leader, kindly, humorous, intelligent. But once he put on his silk hat and frock coat, a metamorphosis, strange and incompre-

hensible, took place. He became altogether a different man; cold, purposeful, determined, bitter, tumbling over obstacles without heart or conscience, using all means to gain his devious ends; scheming, plotting, undermining this man or elevating that, a politician in every sense of the word; cunning, astute, long-headed, far-seeing. He was not suave like his old enemy, the senator; he was blunt because he knew the fullness of his power. But for all his bluntness, he was, when need said must, a diplomat of no mean order. If he brought about a shady election, he had the courage to stand by what he had done. He was respected and detested alike.

The present incumbent in the city hall was no longer of use to him. He was wise enough to see that harm to his power would come about in case the reform

movement got headway; he might even be dethroned. So his general's eye had lighted on Newcomb, as the senator's had lighted on Williard; only he had mistaken his man, whereas the senator had not.

"My boy," he began, "I'm going to lecture you."

"Go ahead," said Newcomb. "I know what the trouble is. I crossed out Mr. Murphy's name from the list you fixed up for my inspection."

"And his name must go back," smiling. "We can't afford to turn him down at this late day."

"I can," said the protégé imperturbably and firmly.

For a moment their glances met and clashed.

"You must always remember the welfare of the party," gently.

"And the people," supplemented the admonished one.

"Of course," with thin lips. "But Murphy's name must stand. We depend upon the eighth ward to elect you, and Murphy holds it in his palm. Your friend Williard will be forced to accept Matthews for the same reason. It's a game of chess, but a great game."

"Matthews? I don't believe it. Williard would not speak to him on the street, let alone put him on the ticket."

"Wait and see."

"He's a blackleg, a gambler, worse than Murphy."

"And what is your grievance against Murphy? He has always served the party well."

"Not to speak of Mr. Murphy."

"What has he done?"

"He has sold his vote three times in the

common council. He sold it once for two thousand dollars in that last pavement deal. I have been rather observant. Let him remain alderman; I can not see my way clear to appoint him to a position in the city hall."

McDermott's eyes narrowed. "Your accusations are grave. If Murphy learns, he may make you prove it."

Newcomb remained silent for a few minutes, his face in thoughtful repose; then having decided to pursue a certain course, he reached into a pigeon-hole of his desk and selected a paper which he gave to McDermott. The latter studied the paper carefully. From the paper his glance traveled to the face of the young man opposite him. He wondered why he hadn't taken more particular notice of the cleft chin and the blue-gray eyes. Had he made a mistake? Was the young fellow's

honesty greater than his ambition? McDermott returned the paper without comment.

"Is that proof enough?" Newcomb asked, a bit of raillery in his tones.

"You should have told me of this long ago."

"I hadn't the remotest idea that Murphy's name would turn up. You can very well understand that I can not consider this man's name as an appointee."

"Why hasn't it been turned over to the district attorney?"

"The plaintiff is a patient man. He left it to me. It is a good sword, and I may have to hold it over Mr. Murphy's neck."

McDermott smiled.

"The Democratic party in this county needs a strong tonic in the nature of a clean bill. I want my appointees men of

high standing; I want them honest; I want them not for what they have done, but what they may do."

McDermott smiled again. "I have made a mistake in not coming to you earlier. There is a great future for a man of your kidney, Newcomb. You have a genuine talent for politics. You possess something that only a dozen men in a hundred thousand possess, a tone. Words are empty things unless they are backed by a tone. Tone holds the auditor, convinces him, directs him if by chance he is wavering. You are a born orator. Miller retires from Congress next year. His usefulness in Washington has passed. How would you like to succeed him?"

Insidious honey! Newcomb looked out of the window. Washington! A seat among the Seats of the Mighty! A torchlight procession was passing through the

street below, and the noise of the fife and drum rose. The world's applause; the beating of hands, the yells of triumph, the laudation of the press—the world holds no greater thrill than this. Art and literature stand pale beside it. But a worm gnawed at the heart of this rose, a canker ate into the laurel. Newcomb turned. He was by no means guileless.

"When I accepted this nomination, I did so because I believed that the party was in danger, and that, if elected, I might benefit the people. I have remained silent; I have spoken but little of my plans; I have made few promises. Mr. McDermott, I am determined, first and foremost, to be mayor in all the meaning of the word. I refuse to be a figurehead. I have crossed out Murphy's name because he is a dishonest citizen. Yes, I am ambitious; but I would forego Wash-

ington rather than reach it by shaking Murphy's hand." The blood of the old war-governor tingled in his veins at that moment.

"It must be replaced," quietly.

"In face of that document?"

"In spite of it."

"I refuse!"

"Listen to reason, my boy; you are young, and you have to learn that in politics there's always a bitter pill with the sweet. To elect you I have given my word to Murphy that he shall have the office."

"You may send Mr. Murphy to me," said Newcomb curtly. "I'll take all the blame."

"This is final?"

"It is. And I am surprised that you should request this of me."

"He will defeat you."

"So be it."

McDermott was exceedingly angry, but he could not help admiring the young man's resoluteness and direct honesty.

"You are making a fatal mistake. I shall make an enemy of the man, and I shall not be able to help you. I have a great deal at stake. If we lose the eighth, we lose everything, and for years to come."

"Perhaps. One dishonest step leads to another, and if I should sanction this man, I should not hesitate at greater dishonesty. My honesty is my bread and butter . . . and my conscience."

"Corporations have no souls; politics has no conscience. Williard . . ."

"My name is Newcomb," abruptly. "In a matter of this kind I can not permit myself to be subjected to comparisons. You brought about my present position in municipal affairs."

"We had need of you, and still need you," confessed the other reluctantly. "The party needs new blood."

"You are a clever man, Mr. McDermott; you are a leader; let me appeal to your better judgment. Murphy is a blackguard, and he would be in any party, in any country. In forcing him on me, you rob me of my self-respect."

McDermott shrugged. "In this case he is a necessary evil. The success of the party depends upon his good will. Listen. Will you find, in all this wide land, a ruling municipality that is incorrupt? Is there not a fly in the ointment whichever way you look? Is not dishonesty fought with dishonesty; isn't it corruption against corruption? Do you believe for a minute that you can bring about this revolution? No, my lad; no. This is a workaday world; Utopia is dreamland.

You can easily keep your eye on this man. If he makes a dishonest move, you can find it in your power to remove him effectually. But I swear to you that he is absolutely necessary."

"Well, I will assume the risk of his displeasure."

"Show him your document, and tell him that if he leaves you in the lurch at the polls, you'll send him to prison. That's the only way out." McDermott thought he saw light.

"Make a blackmailer of myself? Hardly."

"I am sorry." McDermott rose. "You are digging a pit for a very bright future."

"Politically, perhaps."

"If you are defeated, there is no possible method of sending you to Washington in Miller's place. You must have

popularity to back you. I have observed that you are a very ambitious young man."

"Not so ambitious as to obscure my sense of right."

"I like your pluck, my boy, though it stands in your own light. I'll do all I can to pacify Murphy. Good night and good luck to you." And McDermott made his departure.

Newcomb remained motionless in his chair, studying the night. So much for his dreams! He knew what McDermott's "I'll do what I can" meant. If only he had not put his heart so thoroughly into the campaign! Was there any honesty? Was it worth while to be true to oneself? Murphy controlled nearly four hundred votes. For six years the eighth ward had carried the Democratic party into victory. Had he turned this aside? For years the elections had been like cheese-

parings; and in ten years there hadn't been a majority of five hundred votes on either side. If Murphy was a genuine party man, and not a leech, he would stand square for his party and not consider personal enmity. What would he do when he heard from McDermott that he (Newcomb) had deliberately crossed him off the ticket of appointees?

From among some old papers in a drawer Newcomb produced the portrait of a young girl of sixteen in fancy dress. When he had studied this a certain length of time, he took out another portrait: it was the young girl grown into superb womanhood. The eyes were kind and merry, the mouth beautiful, the brow fine and smooth like a young poet's, a nose with the slightest tilt; altogether a high-bred, queenly, womanly face, such as makes a man desire to do great things in

the world. Newcomb had always loved her. He had gone through the various phases: the boy, the diffident youth, the man. (Usually it takes three women to bring about these changes!) There was nothing wild or incoherent in his love, nothing violent or passionate; rather the serene light, the steady burning light, that guides the ships at sea; constant, enduring, a sure beacon.

As he studied the face from all angles, his jaws hardened. He lifted his chin defiantly. He had the right to love her; he had lived cleanly, he had dealt justly to both his friends and his enemies, he owed no man, he was bound only to his mother, who had taught him the principles of manly living. He had the right to love any woman in the world. . . . And there was Williard—handsome, easy-going old Dick! Why was it written that

their paths must cross in everything? Yes, Dick loved her, too, but with an affection that had come only with majority. Williard had everything to offer besides. Should he step down and aside for his friend? Did friendship demand such a sacrifice? No! Let Williard fight for her as he (Newcomb) intended to fight for her; and if Williard won, there would be time then to surrender.

It was almost twelve when the scrub-woman aroused him from his reveries. He closed his desk and went home, his heart full of battle. He would put up the best fight that was in him, for love and for fame; and if he lost he would still have his manhood and self-respect, which any woman might be proud to find at her feet, to accept or decline. He would go into Murphy's own country and fight him openly and without secret weapons. He

knew very well that he held it in his power to coerce Murphy, but that wasn't fighting.

Neither of the candidates slept well that night.

So the time went forward. The second Tuesday in November was but a fortnight off. Newcomb fought every inch of ground. He depended but little, if any, upon McDermott's assistance, though that gentleman came gallantly to his rescue, as it was necessary to save his own scalp. It crept into the papers that there was a rupture between Murphy and the Democratic candidate. The opposition papers cried in glee; the others remained silent. Murphy said nothing when questioned; he simply smiled. Newcomb won the respect of his opponents. The laboring classes saw in him a Moses, and

they hailed him with cheers whenever they saw him.

There were many laughable episodes during the heat of the campaign; but Newcomb knew how and when to laugh. He answered questions from the platform, and the ill-mannered were invariably put to rout by his good-natured wit. Once they hoisted him on top of a bar in an obscure saloon. His shoulders touched the gloomy ceiling, and he was forced to address the habitués, with his head bent like a turtle's, his nose and eyes offended by the heat and reek of kerosene and cheap tobacco. They had brought him there to bait him; they carried him out on their shoulders. To those who wanted facts he gave facts; to some he told humorous stories, more or less applicable; and to others he spoke his sincere convictions.

Meantime Williard took hold of affairs, but in a bored fashion. He did the best he knew how, but it wasn't the best that wins high place in the affections of the people.

The betting was even.

Election day came round finally—one of those rare days when the pallid ghost of summer returns to view her past victories, when the broad wings of the West go a-winnowing the skies, and the sun shines warm and grateful. On that morning a change took place in Newcomb's heart. He became filled with dread. After leaving the voting-polls early in the morning, he returned to his home and refused to see any one. He even had the telephone wires cut. Only his mother saw him, and hovered about him with a thousand kindly attentions. At the door she became a veritable dragon; not even tele-

graph messengers could pass her or escape her vigilance.

At six in the evening Newcomb ordered around his horse. He mounted and rode away into the hill country south of the city, into the cold crisp autumn air. There was fever in his veins that needed cooling; there were doubts and fears in his mind that needed clearing. He wanted that sense of physical exhaustion which makes a man indifferent to mental blows.

The day passed and the night came. Election night! The noisy, good-natured crowds in the streets, the jostling, snail-moving crowds! The illuminated canvas-sheets in front of the newspaper offices! The blare of horns, the cries, the yells, the hoots and hurrahs! The petty street fights! The stalled surface-cars, the swearing cabbies, the venders of horns and whistles, the newsboys hawking their

extras! It is the greatest of all spectacular nights; humanity comes out into the open.

The newspaper offices were yellow with lights. It was a busy time. There was a continuous coming and going of messengers, bringing in returns. The newspaper men took off their coats and rolled up their sleeves. Figures, figures, thousands of figures to sift and resift! Filtering through the various noises was the maddening click of the telegraph instruments. Great drifts of waste paper littered the floors. A sandwich man served coffee and sandwiches. The chief distributed cigars. Everybody was writing, writing. Five men were sent out to hunt for Newcomb, but none could find him. His mother refused to state where he had gone; in fact, she knew nothing save that he had gone horseback riding.

At nine there was a gathering at the

club. Williard was there, and all who had charge of the wheels within wheels. They had ensconced themselves in the huge davenports in the bow-window facing the street, and had given orders to the steward to charge everything that night to Senator Gordon. A fabulous number of corks were pulled; but gentlemen are always orderly.

Williard, however, seemed anything but happy. He had dined at the senator's that evening, and something had taken place there which the general public would never learn. He was gloomy, and the wine he drank only added to his gloom.

The younger element began to wander in, carrying those execrable rooster-posters. A gay time ensued.

Newcomb had ridden twelve miles into the country. At eight o'clock the tem-

perature changed and it began to snow. He turned and rode back toward the city, toward victory or defeat. Sometimes he went at a canter, sometimes at a trot. By and by he could see the aureola from the electric lights wavering above the city. Once he struck a wind-match and glanced at his watch. Had he lost or had he won? A whimsical inspiration came to him. He determined to hear victory or defeat from the lips of the girl he loved. The snow fell softly into his face and melted. His hair became matted over his eyes; his gauntlets dripped and the reins became slippery; a steam rose from the horse's body, a big-hearted hunter on which he had ridden many a mile.

"Good boy!" said Newcomb; "we'll have it first from her lips."

Finally he struck the asphalt of the city limits, and he slowed down to a walk. He

turned into obscure streets. Whenever he saw a bonfire, he evaded it.

It was ten o'clock when he drew up in front of the Gordon home. He tied his horse to the post with the hitching-chain and knotted the reins so that they would not slip over the horse's head, wiped his face with his handkerchief, and walked bravely up to the veranda. There were few lights. Through the library window he saw the girl standing at the telephone. He prayed that she might be wholly alone. After a moment's hesitation he pressed the button and waited.

Betty herself came to the door. She peered out.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I did not expect that you would recognize me," said Newcomb, laughing.

"John? Where in the world did you come from?" taking him by the arm and

dragging him into the hall. "Good gracious!"

"The truth is, Betty, I took to my heels at six o'clock, and have been riding around the country ever since." He sent her a penetrating glance.

"Come in to the fire," she cried impulsively. "You are cold and wet and hungry."

"Only wet," he admitted as he entered the cheerful library. He went directly to the blazing grate and spread out his red, wet, aching hands. He could hear her bustling about; it was a pleasant sound. A chair rolled up to the fender; the rattle of a tea-table followed. It was all very fine. "I ought to be ashamed to enter a house in these reeking clothes," he said; "but the temptation was too great."

"You are always welcome, John," softly.

His keen ear caught the melancholy sympathy in her tone. He shrugged. He had lost the fight. Had he won, she would already have poured forth her congratulations.

"Sit down," she commanded, "while I get the tea. Or would you prefer brandy?"

"The tea, by all means. I do not need brandy to bolster up my courage." He sat down.

She left the room and returned shortly with biscuit and tea. She filled a cup, put in two lumps of sugar, and passed the cup to him.

"You've a good memory," he said, smiling at her. "It's nice to have one's likes remembered, even in a cup of tea. I look as if I had been to war, don't I?"

She buttered a biscuit. He ate it, not because he was hungry, but because her

fingers had touched it. It was a phantom kiss. He put the cup down.

"Now, which is it; have I been licked, or have I won?"

"What!" she cried; "do you mean to tell me you do not know?" She gazed at him bewilderedly.

"I have been four hours in the saddle. I know nothing, save that which instinct and the sweet melancholy of your voice tell me. Betty, tell me, I've been licked, haven't I, and old Dick has gone and done it, eh?"

The girl choked for a moment; there was a sob in her throat.

"Yes, John."

Newcomb reached over and tapped the hearth with his riding-crop, absent-mindedly. The girl gazed at him, her eyes shining in a mist of unshed tears. . . . She longed to reach out her hand

and smooth the furrows from his care-worn brow, to brush the melting crystals of snow from his hair; longed to soothe the smart of defeat which she knew was burning his heart. She knew that only strong men suffer in silence.

From a half-opened window the night breathed upon them, freighted with the far-off murmur of voices.

"I confess to you that I built too much on the outcome. I am ambitious; I want to be somebody, to take part in the great affairs of the world. I fought the very best I knew how. I had many dreams. Do you recollect the verses I used to write to you when we were children? There was always something of the poet in me, and it is still there, only it no longer develops on paper. I had looked toward Washington . . . . even toward you, Betty."

Silence. The girl sat very still. Her face was white and her eyes large.

"I am honest. I can see now that I have no business in politics. . . ." He laughed suddenly and turned toward the girl. "I was on the verge of wailing. I'm licked, and I must begin all over again. Dick will make a good mayor, that is, if they leave him alone. . . . Whimsical, wasn't it, of me, coming here to have you tell me the news?" He looked away.

The girl smiled and held out her hand to him, and as he did not see it, laid it gently on his sleeve.

"It does not matter, John. Some day you will realize all your ambitions. You are not the kind of man who gives up. Defeat is a necessary step to greatness; and you will become great. I am glad that you came to me." She knew now; all

her doubts were gone, all the confusing shadows.

Newcomb turned and touched her hand with his lips.

"Why did you come to me?" she asked with fine courage.

His eyes widened. "Why did I come to you? If I had won I should have told you. But I haven't won; I have lost."

"Does that make the difference so great?"

"It makes the difficulty greater."

"Tell me!" with a voice of command.

They both rose suddenly, rather unconsciously, too. Their glances held, magnet and needle-wise. Across the street a bonfire blazed, and the ruddy light threw a mellow rose over their strained faces.

"I love you," he said simply. "That is what drew me here, that is what has always drawn me here. But say nothing to

me, Betty. God knows I am not strong enough to suffer two defeats in one night. God bless you and make you happy!"

He turned and took a few steps toward the door.

"If it were not defeat . . . if it were victory?" she said, in a kind of whisper, her hands on the back of the chair.

The senator came in about midnight. He found his daughter asleep in a chair before a half-dead fire. There was a tender smile on her lips. He touched her gently.

"It is you, daddy?" Her glance traveled from his florid countenance to the clock. "Mercy! I have been dreaming these two hours."

"What do you suppose Newcomb did to-night?" lighting a cigar.

"What did he do?"

"Came into the club and congratulated Williard publicly."

"He did that?" cried the girl, her cheeks dyeing exquisitely.

"Did it like a man, too." The senator dropped into a chair. "It was a great victory, my girl."

Betty smiled. "Yes, it was."

THE ADVENT OF MR. "SHIFTY" SULLIVAN

I

"IT is positively dreadful!"

Even with the puckered brow and drooping lips, Mrs. Cathewe was a most charming young person.

Absently she breathed upon the chilled window-pane, and with the pink horn of her tapering forefinger drew letters and grotesque noses and millions on millions of money.

Who has not, at one time or another, pursued art and riches in this harmless fashion?

The outlook—from the window, not the millions—was not one to promote any

degree of cheerfulness, being of darkness, glistening pavements and a steady, blurring rain; and at this particular moment Mrs. Cathewe was quite in sympathy with the outlook; that is to say, dismal.

"Only last week," she went on, "it was an actor out of employ, a man with reversible cuffs and a celluloid collar; but even he knew the difference between bouillon and tea. And now, Heaven have mercy, it is a prize-fighter!"

Mrs. Cathewe reopened the note which in her wrath she had crushed in her left hand, and again read it aloud:

"DEAR NANCY—Am bringing home Sullivan, the boxer, to dinner. Now, ducky, don't get mad. I want to study him at close range. You know that I am to have a great boxing scene in my new book, and this study is absolutely necessary. In haste. JACK."

Mrs. Cathewe turned pathetically to her companion.

"Isn't it awful? A prize-fighter, in spite of all this reform movement! A pugilist!"

"A pug, as my brother would tersely but inelegantly express it," and Caroline Boderick lifted an exquisitely molded chin and laughed; a rollicking laugh which, in spite of her endeavor to remain unmoved, twisted up the corners of Mrs. Cathewe's rebel mouth.

"Forgive me, Nan, if I laugh; but who in the world could help it? It is so droll. This is the greatest house! Imagine, I had the blues the worst kind of way to-day; and now I shall be laughing for a whole week. You dear girl, what do you care? You'll be laughing, too, presently. When a woman marries a successful painter or a popular novelist, she will find that she has wedded also a life full of surprises, full of amusing scenes; ennui

is a word cast forth to wander among commonplace folk. Your husband must have his model, just the same as if he were an artist, which he undeniably is."

"Models!" scornfully. "I wish he were a romanticist. I declare, if this realism keeps on, I shall go and live in the country!"

"And have your husband's curios remain all night instead of simply dining." And Caroline pressed her hands against her sides.

"That is it; laugh, laugh! Carol, you have no more sympathy than a turtle."

"You are laughing yourself," said Caroline.

"It is because I'm looking at you. Why, I am positively raging!" She tore her husband's letter into shreds and cast them at her feet. "Jack is always upsetting my choicest plans."

"And my sobriety. If I had a husband like *yours* I should always be the happiest and merriest woman in the world. What a happy woman you must and ought to be!"

"I am, Carol, I am; but there are times when Jack is as terrible and uncertain as Mark Twain's New England weather. Supposing I had been giving a big dinner to-night? It would have been just the same."

"Only more amusing. Fancy Mrs. Nottingham-Stuart taking inventory of this Mr. Sullivan through that pince-nez of hers!"

A thought suddenly sobered Mrs. Cathewe.

"But whatever shall I do, Carol? I have invited the rector to dine with us."

Mirth spread its sunny wings and flew away, leaving Caroline's beautiful eyes

thoughtful and contemplative. "I understood that it was to be a very little dinner for the family."

"Carol, why don't you like the rector? He is almost handsome."

"I do like him, Nan."

"Oh, I don't mean in that way," impulsively.

"In what way?" asked Caroline, her voice losing some of its warmth.

"Passively."

The faint, perpendicular line above Caroline's nose was the only sign of her displeasure.

"Has he proposed to you?"

"Gracious sakes! one would think that the rector was in love with me. Nan, you are very embarrassing when you look like that. Match-making isn't your forte. Besides, the rector and I do not get on very well. Bifurcated riding skirts are not to

his fancy; and I would not give up my morning ride for the best man living. Oh, Nan, you ought to ride a horse; there's nothing like it in the world."

"The rector has called upon you more than any other girl in town." When Mrs. Cathewe had an idea, she was very persistent about it. "I have even seen him watching you when delivering a sermon."

Caroline laughed.

"Calling doesn't signify. And you must remember, daddy is the banker of St. Paul's. No, Nan; I don't mean that; I am sure that the rector's calls have nothing to do with the finances of the church. But, to tell the truth, daddy calls him a mollycoddle; says he hasn't enough gumption—whatever that may be—to stand up for himself at the trustees' meetings. All the trustees are opposed to him because he is not over thirty."

"And the best-looking rector the church ever had," supplemented Mrs. Cathewe.

"But a mollycoddle, Nan! You wouldn't have me marry a mollycoddle, would you?" There was a covert plea in her tones which urged Mrs. Cathewe emphatically to deny that the Reverend Richard Allen was a mollycoddle.

Mrs. Cathewe did deny it. "He is not a mollycoddle, and you very well know it. Jack says that his meekness and humility is all a sham."

"A hypocrite!" sitting up very straight.

"Mercy, no! His meekness is merely a sign of splendid self-control. No man could be a mollycoddle and have eyes like his. True, they are mild, but of the mildness of the sea on a calm day. 'Ware of the hurricane!"

"Has Mr. Cathewe found out yet to

what college he belonged before he became a divinity student?"

"No; and even I have never had the courage to ask him. But Jack thinks it is Harvard, because the rector let slip one day something about Cambridge. Why don't you write to ask your brother about him?"

For reasons best known to herself, Caroline did not answer.

"Are you ever going to get married? You are twenty-four."

Caroline was laughing again; but it was not the same spirit of mirth that had been called into life by the possible and probable advent of Mr. "Shifty" Sullivan.

"You ought to get married," declared Mrs. Cathewe. "Think of the dinners and teas I should give, following the announcement."

"It is almost worth the risk," mockingly. Caroline arose and walked over to the grate and sat down in the Morris chair. She took up the tongs and stirred the maple log. The spurt of flame discovered a face almost as beautiful as it was interesting and amiable. Her principal claim to beauty, however, lay in her eyes, which were large and brown, with a glister of gold in the rim of that part of the iris which immediately surrounded the pupil. With these eyes she was fascinating; even her dearest friends admitted this; and she was without caprices, which is a rare trait in a beautiful woman. She was also as independent as the Declaration which her mother's grandfather signed a hundred and some odd years before. She came naturally into the spirit, her father being a retired army officer, now the financial mainstay of St. Paul's,

of which the Reverend Richard Allen had recently been duly appointed rector.

It is propitious to observe at once that the general possessed an unreliable liver and a battered shin which always ached with rheumatism during rainy weather. Only two persons dared to cross him on stormy days—his daughter and his son. The son was completing his final year at Harvard in the double capacity of so-and-so on the 'varsity crew and some-place-or-other on the eleven, and felt the importance of the luster which he was adding to the historic family name. But this story in nowise concerns him; rather the adventures of Mr. Sullivan, the pugilist, and the rector of St. Paul.

"Mollycoddle," mused Caroline, replacing the tongs.

"Oh, your father's judgment is not infallible."

"It is where courage is concerned," retorted Caroline.

"Well, what's a mollycoddle, anyway?" demanded Mrs. Cathewe, forgetting for the time being her own imminent troubles.

"Does Webster define it? I do not recall. But at any rate the accepted meaning of the word is a person without a backbone, a human being with rubber vertebræ, as daddy expresses it."

"Oh, fudge! your father likes men who slam doors, talk loudly, and bang their fists in their palms."

"Not always," smiling; "at least on days like this."

"Yes, I understand," replied Mrs. Cathewe, laughing. "B-r-r-r! I can see him. Jack says he eats them alive, whatever he means by that."

"Poor daddy!"

"I remember the late rector. When-

ever he made a begging call he first asked the servant at the door, 'How's the general's liver to-day?' 'Bad, bad, your worship.' I overheard this dialogue one day while waiting for you. I had to bury my head in the sofa pillows."

"You are going to have Brussels sprouts for salad?"

"Yes. Why?" amused at this queer turn in the conversation.

"I was wondering if your Mr. Sullivan will call them amateur cabbages?"

"Why did you remind me of him? I had almost forgotten him."

"If only I can keep a sober face!" said Caroline, clasping her hands. "If he wears a dress suit, it is sure to pucker across the shoulders, be short in the sleeves, and generally wrinkled. He will wear a huge yellow stone, and his hair will be clipped close to the skull. It will

be covered with as many white scars as a map with railroad tracks. 'Mr. Sullivan, permit me to introduce the Reverend Richard Allen.' 'Sure.' Oh, it is rich!" And the laughter which followed smothered the sound of closing doors. "Nan, it is a tonic. I wish I were a novelist's wife. 'Mr. Sullivan, I am charmed to meet you.' I can imagine the rector's horror."

"And what is going to horrify the rector?" asked a manly voice from the doorway.

Both women turned guiltily, each uttering a little cry of surprise and dismay. They beheld a young man of thirty, of medium height, who looked shorter than he really was because of the breadth of his shoulders. His face was clean-shaven and manly; the head was well developed, the chin decided, the blue-gray eyes alight with animation and expectancy.

The clerical frock was buttoned closely to the throat, giving emphasis to the splendid breathing powers concealed beneath. The Reverend Richard Allen looked all things save the mollycoddle, as the flush on Caroline's cheeks conceded. And as she arose, she vaguely wondered how much he had heard.

The rector, being above all things a gentleman, did not press his question. He came forward and shook hands, and then spread his fingers over the crackling log.

"What do you suppose has happened to me this day?" he began, turning his back to the blaze and looking first at Mrs. Cathewe because she was his hostess, and then at Caroline because she was the woman who lived first in his thoughts.

"You have found a worthy mendicant?" suggested Caroline, taking up the hand-screen and shading her eyes.

"Cold, cold."

"You have been asked to make an address before some woman's club," Mrs. Cathewe offered.

"Still cold. No. The *Morning Post* has asked me, in the interests of reform, to write up the prize-fight to-morrow night between Sullivan and McManus, setting forth the contest in all its brutality."

The two women looked at each other and laughed nervously. The same thought had occurred to each.

"Mr. Allen," said Mrs. Cathewe, deciding immediately to explain the cause of her merriment, "as you entered you must have overheard us speak of a Mr. Sullivan. You know how eccentric Mr. Cathewe is. Well, when I invited you to dine this evening I had no idea that this husband of mine was going to bring home Mr. Sullivan in order to study him at

close range, as a possible character in a new book he is writing."

The rector stroked his chin. Caroline, observing him shyly, was positive that the luster in his eyes was due to suppressed laughter.

"That will be quite a diversion," he said, seating himself. What a charming profile this girl possessed! Heigh-ho! between riches and poverty the chasm grew wide.

"And we have been amusing ourselves by dissecting Mr. Sullivan," added the woman with the charming profile. "I suggested that if he wore a dress suit it would be either too large or too small."

"Mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Cathewe, rising suddenly as the hall door slammed, "I believe he has come already. Whatever shall I do, Carol, whatever shall I do?" in a loud whisper.

The rector got up and smiled at Caroline, who returned the smile. In the matter of appreciating humor, she and the rector stood upon common ground.

Presently the novelist and his guest entered. Both he and Mr. Sullivan appeared to be in the best of spirits, for their mouths were twisted in grins.

"My dear," began Cathewe, "this is Mr. Sullivan; Mr. Sullivan, Miss Boderick and the Reverend Richard Allen, of St. Paul's."

"I am delighted," said Mr. Sullivan, bowing.

There was not a wrinkle in Mr. Sullivan's dress suit; there were no diamond studs in his shirt bosom, no watch-chain; just the rims of his cuffs appeared, and these were of immaculate linen. His hair was black and thick and soft as hair always is that is frequently subjected to

soap and water. In fact, there was only one sign which betrayed Mr. Sullivan's profitable but equivocal business in life, and this was an ear which somewhat resembled a withered mushroom.

Caroline was disconcerted; she was even embarrassed. This pleasant-faced gentleman bowing to her was as far removed from her preconceived idea of a pugilist as the earth is removed from the sun. She did not know—as the wise writer knows—that it is only pugilists who can not fight who are all scarred and battered. She saw the rector shake Mr. Sullivan's hand. From him her gaze roved to Mrs. Cathewe, and the look of perplexity on that young matron's face caused her to smother the sudden wild desire to laugh.

"My dear, I shall leave you to entertain Mr. Sullivan while I change my

clothes;" and Cathewe rushed from the room. He was a man who could not hold in laughter very successfully.

"Come over to the fire and warm yourself," said the rector pleasantly. The look of entreaty in Mrs. Cathewe's eyes could not possibly be ignored.

Mr. Sullivan crossed the room, gazing about curiously.

"I haven't th' slightest idea, ma'am," said the famed pugilist, addressing his hostess, "what your husband's graft is; but I understand he's a literary fellow that writes books, an' I suppose he knows why he ast me here t' eat."

Caroline sighed with relief; his voice was very nearly what she expected it would be.

"An' besides," continued Mr. Sullivan, "I'm kind o' curious myself t' see you swells get outside your feed. I ain't stuck

on these togs, generally; a man's afraid t' breathe hearty."

Mrs. Cathewe shuddered slightly; Mr. Sullivan was rubbing the cold from his fungus-like ear. What should she do to entertain this man? she wondered. She glanced despairingly at Caroline; but Caroline was looking at the rector, who in turn seemed absorbed in Mr. Sullivan. She was without help; telegraphic communication was cut off, as it were.

"Do you think it will snow to-night?" she asked.

"It looks like it would," answered Mr. Sullivan, with a polite but furtive glance at the window. "Though there'll be a bigger push out to-morrer if it's clear. It's goin' t' be a good fight. D' you ever see a scrap, sir?" he asked, turning to the rector.

Caroline wondered if it was the fire or

the rector's own blood which darkened his cheek.

"I belong to the clergy," said the rector softly; "it is our duty not to witness fights, but to prevent them."

"Now, I say!" remonstrated Mr. Sullivan, "you folks run around in your autos, knock down people an' frighten horses, so's they run away; you go out an' kill thousands of birds an' deer an' fish, an' all that; an' yet you're th' first t' holler when two healthy men pummel each other for a livin'. You ain't consistent. Why, th' hardest punch I ever got never pained me more'n an hour, an' I took th' fat end of th' purse at that. When you're a kid, ain't you always quarrelin' an' scrappin'? Sure. Sometimes it was with reason an' cause, an' again jus' plain love of fightin'. Well, that's me. I fight because I like it, an' because it pays. Sure.

It's on'y natural for some of us t' fight all th' time; an' honest, I'm dead weary of th' way th' papers yell about th' brutal prize-fight. If I want t' get my block punched off, that's my affair; an' I don't see what business some old fussies have in interferin'."

"It isn't really the fighting, Mr. Sullivan," replied the rector, who felt compelled to defend his point of view; "it's the rough element which is always brought to the surface during these engagements. Men drink and use profane language and wager money."

"As t' that, I don't say;" and Mr. Sullivan moved his hands in a manner which explained his inability to account for the transgressions of the common race.

"What's a block?" whispered Mrs. Cathewe into Caroline's ear.

Caroline raised her eyebrows; she had

almost surrendered to the first natural impulse, that of raising her hands above her head, as she had often seen her brother do when faced by an unanswerable question.

The trend of conversation veered. Mr. Sullivan declared that he would never go upon the stage, and all laughed. Occasionally the women ventured timidly to offer an observation which invariably caused Mr. Sullivan to loose an expansive grin. And when he learned that the rector was to witness the fight in the capacity of a reporter, he enjoyed the knowledge hugely.

Presently Cathewe appeared, and dinner was announced. Mr. Sullivan sat between his host and hostess. No, he would not have a cocktail nor a highball; he never drank. Mrs. Cathewe straightway marked him down as a rank impostor. Didn't prize-fighters always drink and

carouse and get locked up by the police officers?

"Well, this is a new one on me," Mr. Sullivan admitted, as he tasted of his caviar and quietly dropped his fork. "May I ask what it is?"

"It's Russian caviar. It is like Russian literature; one has to cultivate a taste for it." The novelist glanced amusedly at the rector.

"It reminds me of what happened t' me at White Plains a couple of years ago. I was in trainin' that fall at Mulligan's. You've heard of Mulligan; greatest man on th' mat in his time. Well, I bucked up against French spinach. Says he: 'Eat it.' Says I, 'I don't like it.' Says he, 'I don't care whether you like it or not. I don't like your mug, but I have t' put up with it. Eat that spinach.' Says I, 'I don't see how I can eat it if I don't like it.'

An' an hour after he gives me th' bill, an' I'd have had on'y thirty minutes t' get out but for th' housekeeper, who patched it up. Those were great times. Sure. Well, no spinach or caviar in mine. Now say, what's th' game? Do you want my history, or jus' a scrap or two?"

"Describe how you won the championship from McGonegal," said Cathewe eagerly, nodding to the butler to serve the oysters.

Mr. Sullivan toyed with the filigree butter-knife, mentally deciding that its use was for cutting pie. He cast an oblique glance at the immobile countenance of the English butler, and ahemmed.

"Well," he began, "it was like this. . . . "

As Mr. Sullivan went on, a series of whispered questions and answers was

started between Caroline and the rector.

Caroline: What does he mean by "block"?

The Rector: His head, I believe.

Caroline: Oh!

Mr. Sullivan: There wasn't much doin' in th' third round. We fiddled a while. On'y once did either of us get t' th' ropes . . . an' th' bell rang. Th' fourth was a hot one; hammer an' tongs from th' start off. He hooked me twice on th' wind, and I handed him out a jolt on th' jaw that put him t' th' mat. . . . I had th' best of th' round.

Caroline: In mercy's sake, what does he mean by "slats"?

The Rector (seized with a slight coughing): Possibly his ribs.

Caroline: Good gracious! (Whether this ejaculation was caused by surprise or by the oyster on which she had put more

horse-radish than was suited to her palate, will always remain a mystery.)

Mr. Sullivan: We were out for gore th' fift' round. He was gettin' strong on his hooks.

Mrs. Cathewe (interrupting him with great timidity): What do you mean by "hooks"?

Mr. Sullivan: It's a blow like this. (Illustrates and knocks over the centerpiece. Water and flowers spread over the table.) I say, now, look at that. Ain't I a Mike now, t' knock over th' flower-pot like that?

Cathewe: Never mind that, Mr. Sullivan. Go on with the fight.

Mr. Sullivan: Where was I? Oh, yes; he put it all over me that round. . . . They had counted eight when th' bell rang an' saved me.

Caroline: Hit him on the *phonograph!*

The Rector (reddening): It is possible that he refers to Mr. McGonegal's mouth.

Caroline: Well, I never! And I've got a slangy brother, too, at Harvard.

(The rector looks gravely at his empty oyster-shells.)

Mr. Sullivan: Things went along about even till th' tenth, when I blacked his lamps.

Caroline: Lamps?

The Rector: Eyes, doubtless.

Caroline: It's getting too deep for me.

Mr. Sullivan: The last round I saw that I had him goin' all right. In two seconds I had burgundy flowin' from his trombone.

(Cathewe leans back in his chair and laughs.)

Mrs. Cathewe (bewilderingly): Burgundy?

Mr. Sullivan (rather impatiently): A

jolt on th' nose. Well, there was some more waltzin', and then a hook an' a swing, an' him on th' mat, down an' out. I made six thousand, an' on'y got this tin ear t' show for my trouble.

It was fully ten o'clock when the coffee was served. Mr. Sullivan may have lost not a few "e's" and "g's" in the passing, but for all that he proved no small entertainment; and when he arose with the remark that he was "for th' tall pines," both ladies experienced an amused regret.

"Which way do you go?" asked Mr. Sullivan, laying his hand on the rector's arm.

"I pass your hotel. I shall be pleased to walk with you."

"I say," suddenly exclaimed Mr. Sullivan, pressing his pudgy fingers into the rector's arm, "where did you get this

arm? Why, it is as tough as a railroad tie."

"A course of physical culture," said the rector, visibly embarrassed.

"Physical culture? All right. But don't ever get mad at me," laughed Mr. Sullivan. "It's as big as a pile-driver."

The novelist told Mr. Sullivan that he was very much obliged for his company.

"Don't mention it. Drop int' th' fight to-morrer night. You'll get more ideas there'n you will hearin' me shoot hot air."

Cathewe looked slyly at his wife. He was a man, and more than once he had slipped away from the club and taken in the last few rounds, and then had returned home to say what a dull night he had had at the club.

Mrs. Cathewe had her arm lovingly around Caroline's waist. All at once she felt Caroline start.

"What is it?" she whispered.

"Nothing, nothing!" Caroline declared quickly.

But on the way home in her carriage Caroline wondered where the Reverend Richard Allen, rector of St. Paul's, had acquired *his* tin ear.

II

"DEAR SIS—Yours received. Have hunted up the name, and have found that your Reverend Richard Allen is an '89 man, one of the best all-round men we ever had on the track. He was a terror, too, so an old grad tells me. Got kicked out in his senior year. It seems that his chum and roommate was very deeply in the hole, not extravagantly, like yours truly, but by a series of hard knocks. Allen had no cash himself. And you know when you haven't any money in sight, you can't borrow any. One night at the Museum (there was a cheap show on) a prize-fighter offered $300 to any one who would stand up before him for five rounds. Allen jumped up on the stage and licked the pug to a standstill. He got a bad swipe on the ear, however; and if your Allen has what they call a tin ear, an ear that looks as if my best bullpup had tried to make his dinner off it, *ecce homo!* He paid his mate's debts, and then was requested to call on the fac. The old ladies told him to pack up. He did. He has never returned to college since. But why do

you want to know all about him? They say he was a handsome duffer. You know I haven't seen him yet, not having been home since last Easter time. Now, for Heaven's sake, Sis, don't go and get daffy on his Riverince. I've got a man in tow for you, the best fellow that ever lived. Affectionately, JACK."

"P. S.—Can't you shove a couple of 50's in your next letter to me? The governor's liver wasn't in good shape the first of the month."

Caroline dropped the letter into her lap and stared out of the window. It was snowing great, soft, melting flakes. She did not know whether to laugh or to cry, nor what occasioned this impulse to do either. So he was a Cambridge man, and had been expelled for prize-fighting; for certainly it had been prize-fighting, even though the motive had been a good and manly one.

"A milksop!" There was no doubt, no hesitancy; her laughter rang out fresh

and clear. What would her father say when he learned the truth? Her next thought was, why should the rector pose as a lamb, patient and unspeaking, when all the time he was a lion? She alone had solved the mystery. It was self-control, it was power. This discovery filled her with a quiet exultation. She was a woman, and to unravel a secret was as joyful a task for her as to invent a fashionable hat.

The bygone rectors had interested her little; they had been either pedants, fanatics, or social drones; while this man had gone about his work quietly and modestly. He never said: "I visited the poor to-day." It was the poor who said: "The rector was here to-day with money and clothes." But his past he let remain nebulous; not even the trustees themselves had peered far into it, at least not as far back

as the Cambridge days. Thus, the element of mystery surrounding him first attracted her; the man's personality added to this. The knowledge that he was a college man seemed to place him nearer her social level, though she was not a person to particularize so long as a man proved himself; and the rector had, beyond a doubt, proved himself.

There were dozens of brilliant young men following eagerly in her train. They rode with her, drove with her, and fought for the privilege of playing caddy to her game. Yet, while she liked them all, she cared particularly for none. The rector, being a new species of man, became a study. Time and time again she had invited him to the Country Club; he always excused himself on the ground that he was taking a course of reading such as to demand all his spare time in the day.

One morning she had been riding alone, and had seen him tramping across country. In the spirit of fun she took a couple of fences and caught up with him. He had appeared greatly surprised, even embarrassed, for her woman's eye had been quick to read. She had rallied him upon his stride. He had become silent. And this man had "jumped upon the stage and licked the pug to a standstill!"

"Carol, are you there?"

Caroline started and hid the letter. She arose and admitted her father.

"James says that you received a letter this afternoon. Was it from the boy? Begging for money? Well, don't you dare to send it to him. The ragamuffin has overdrawn seven hundred dollars this month. What's he think I am, a United States Steel Corporation?"

"He has asked me for one hundred

dollars, and I am going to send it to the poor boy to-night."

"Oh, you are, are you? Who's bringing up the scalawag, you or I?"

"You are trying to, daddy, but I believe he's bent on bringing himself up." She ran her fingers through his hair. "I know the weather's bad, daddy, but don't be cross. Come over to the piano and I'll play for you."

"I don't want any music," gruffly.

"Come," dragging him.

"That's the way; I have no authority in this house. But, seriously, Carol, the boy's spending it pretty fast, and it will not do him a bit of good. I want to make a man out of him, not a spendthrift. Play that what-d'you-call-it from Chopin."

"The *Berceuse*?" seating herself at the piano.

The twilight of winter was fast settling

down. The house across the way began to glow at various windows. Still she played. From Chopin she turned to Schumann, from Schumann to Rubinstein, back to Chopin's polonaise and the nocturne in E flat major.

"You play those with a livelier spirit than usual," was the general's only comment. How these haunting melodies took him back to the past, when the girl's mother played them in the golden courting days! He could not see the blush his comment had brought to his daughter's cheek. "My dear, my dear!" he said, with great tenderness, sliding his arm around her waist, "I know that I'm cross at times, but I'm only an old barking dog; don't do any harm. I'll tell you what, if my leg's all right next Saturday I'll ride out to the Country Club with you, and we'll have tea together."

She leaned toward him and kissed him. "Daddy, what makes you think so meanly of the rector? I was thinking of him when you came in."

"I don't think meanly of him; but, hang it, Carol, he always says 'Yes' when I want him to say 'No,' and *vise versa.* He's too complacent. I like a man who's a human being to kick once in a while, a man who's got some fight in him. . . . What are you laughing at, you torment?"

"At something which just occurred to me. There goes the gong for dinner. I am ravenous."

"By the way, I forgot to tell you what I saw in the evening edition of the *Post.* Your parson is going to report the prize-fight to-night. He'll be frightened out of his shoes. I'm going up to the club; going to play a few rubbers. It'll make me forget my grumbling leg. You run over

to Cathewe's or telephone Mrs. Cathewe to run over here."

"Can't you stay in to-night? I don't want anybody but you."

"But I've half promised; besides, I'm sort of blue. I need the excitement."

"Very well; I'll telephone Nan. Mr. Cathewe will probably go to that awful fight in the interests of his new book. She'll come."

"Cathewe's going to the fight, you say? Humph!" The general scratched his ear thoughtfully.

III

THE auditorium was a great barn-like building which had been erected originally for the purpose of a roller-skating rink. Nowadays the charity bazaars were held there, the balls, political mass-meetings, amateur dramatics, and prize-fights.

Cathewe, as he gazed curiously around, pictured to himself the contrast between the Thanksgiving ball of the past week and the present scene, and fell into his usual habit of philosophizing. His seat was high up in the gallery. What faces he saw through the blue and choking haze of smoke! Saloon keepers, idlers, stunted youth, blasé men about town, with a sprinkling of respectable business men,

who ever and anon cast hasty and guilty glances over their shoulders, and when caught would raise a finger as if to say: "You rogue, what are *you* doing here?"—these and other sights met his interested eye. Even he confessed to himself that his presence here was not all due to the gathering of color for his new book. Self-analysis discovered to him that the animal in him was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the fighters. Such is human nature.

Down below he saw the raised platform, strongly protected by ropes. Around this were the reporters' tables, the telegraph operators' desks, a few chairs for the privileged friends of the press, and pails, towels and sponges. Yes, there was the rector, sitting at one of the reporters' tables, erect in his chair, his gaze bent upon his paper pad, apparently oblivious to his strange surroundings. Cathewe

wondered what was going on in that somewhat mystifying mind. He certainly would have been surprised could he have read.

In fact, the rector was going over again his own memorable battle in Boston some ten years ago. He was thinking how it had changed his whole career, how it had swerved him from the bar to the pulpit.

Ah, to be within the magic circle of her presence, to be within sight and touch all his life, sometimes to hear her voice lifted in song, the smooth, white fingers bringing to life the poetry of sound! He had ceased to lie to himself. He loved, with all his heart, with all his soul. He had given up; he had surrendered completely; but she was never to know. Even at this moment poverty took him to the mount and showed him the abyss between him and his heart's desire. He was

aroused from his dreams by a sudden commotion, a subdued murmur. Mr. Sullivan's antagonist, dressed in a gaudy sky-blue bath-robe, was crawling under the ropes, followed by his seconds. The murmur grew into a prolonged cheer when Mr. Sullivan shortly followed in a bath-robe, even richer in hues.

The reporters shifted their writing-pads, lighted fresh cigars, and drew their legs under the tables. The sporting editor of the *Post* turned to the rector.

"I'll tip you off on the technicalities of the scrap," he said. "All you need to do is to watch the men and describe what they do in your own way."

"Thank you," replied the rector. He was calm. When Mr. Sullivan nodded pleasantly, he smiled.

The men in the ring threw aside their bath-robes, and stood forth in all the

splendor of their robust physiques. A short, pompous man, wearing a watch-chain which threatened to disconcert his physical balance, stepped to the ropes and held up his hand. Silence suddenly fell upon two thousand men.

"Th' preliminary is off; th' 'Kid' refuses to go on because th' 'Dago' didn't weigh in as agreed. Th' main bout will now take place. Mr. Sullivan t' th' right, an' Mr. McManus t' th' left." The pompous man took out a greasy telegram from his pocket, and said: "Lanky Williams challenges th' winner fer a purse an' a side bet of fi' thousan'."

He was cheered heartily. Nobody cared about the preliminary "go"; it was Sullivan and McManus the spectators had paid their money to see.

The rector recalled the scenes in *Quo Vadis,* and shrugged his shoulders. Hu-

man nature never changes; only politics and fashions. He himself was vaguely conscious of a guilty thrill as he saw the two men step from their corners and shake hands.

As this is a story not of how Mr. "Shifty" Sullivan won his battle from Mr. McManus, but of how the rector of St. Paul's nearly lost his, I shall not dwell upon the battle as it was fought by rounds. Let it suffice that the crisis came during the twelfth round. Sullivan was having the best of this round, though in the four previous he had been worsted. The men came together suddenly, and there was some rough in-fighting. The pompous man, who was the referee, was kept on the jump. One could hear the pad-pad of blows and the scrape-scrape of shoes on the resined mat, so breathless were the spectators. The boxers became tangled.

"Foul, foul!"

The voice rang out strong and distinct. It was not the referee's voice, for the referee himself looked angrily down whence the voice came. Sullivan, his face writhed in agony, was clinging desperately to his opponent.

"A foul blow!"

Pandemonium. Everybody was yelling, half not knowing why.

The seconds and trainers were clambering into the ring. The referee separated the boxers. They rushed at each other furiously. The seconds stepped in between. A general mix-up followed, during which the pompous man lost his silk hat.

The reporter for the *Post* pulled the rector's coat tails, and the rector sank into his chair, pale and terrified. He had forgotten! Carried away by his old love of

clean fighting, by his love of physical contests, he had forgotten, forgotten!

"Foul! It was a foul!"

"Ye-a! Ye-a! Foul blow!"

"Bully fer th' parson!"

"Sullivan, Sullivan!"

"McManus!"

"Foul, foul! T'row out th' referee!"

"Give th' deacon a show fer his money!"

These and a thousand other cries rose in the vicinity of the rector. Those reporters whose city editors had not thought of the stroke of sending a minister of the gospel to report the fight were delighted. Here was a story worth forty fights, a story to delight thousands and thousands who looked upon St. Paul's as a place where only the rich might worship.

"I declare the fight a draw, an' all bets off!" howled the referee, wiping the

dust from his damaged hat, which he had at length recovered.

The rector rose to move down the aisle to the entrance. He felt morally and physically crushed. All this would be in the newspapers the next morning. He was disgraced; for everybody would ask, "How should he know what a foul blow was?" It was terribly bitter, after having struggled so long. Presently he became aware that men, reeking with cigar smoke and liquors, were talking loudly to him, even cursing him. He caught some words about "makin' us lose our bets, when we come all th' way from N'York."

A hand came into contact with his cheek, and the sting of it ran like fire through his veins. The wrath at his moral defeat broke down the dikes of his self-control; the fury which is always quickly provoked by physical pain in the animal-

ity of man, swept aside his prudence. The man who struck him was seen to rise bodily and fall crumpled among the seats. The man's friends—there were four in number—recovering from their momentary surprise, attacked the rector swiftly, and not without a certain conformity.

What followed has become history. Even Sullivan and his opponent forgot their animosity for the time being, and leaned eagerly over the ropes. Far back in the surging crowd several police helmets could be discerned, but they made little progress. The rector in his tightly fitting frock was at a disadvantage, but his wonderful vigor and activity stood him in good stead. Quick as a cat he leaped from this side to that, dealing his blows with the rapidity of a piston-rod and almost as terrible in effect. Once he went down; but, like Antæus, the touch

of earth revived him and doubled his strength.

Men, in the mad effort to witness this battle, trod on one another's toes, hats were crushed, coats were torn, even blows were struck. They stood on chairs, on tables, yelling and cheering. This was a fight that *was* a fight. Faking had no part in it; there was no partiality of referees. When the police finally arrived it was all over. The rector was brushing his hat, while Cathewe, who had dashed down-stairs at the first sound of the rector's voice, was busy with the rector's coat.

"Want t' appear against 'em?" asked one of the officers.

"No, no! Let them go," cried the rector. "Cathewe, take me out, please; take me home." His hands shook as he put on his hat. He was very white. The knuckles of his left hand were raw and bleeding.

The police finally opened a pathway in the cheering crowd, and through this Cathewe and the rector disappeared. Outside, Cathewe hailed a carriage.

"Cathewe, I have absolutely and positively ruined my career."

The rector sank back among the cushions, overwhelmed. His voice was uneven and choked.

"Nonsense!" cried Cathewe. "What else could you do?"

"I could have passed by the man who struck me."

"Oh, pshaw! A man can not help being human simply because he wears the cloth. It was the bulliest fight I ever saw. It was magnificent! They weren't in it at any time. And you walloped four of 'em, and one was an ex-pugilist. It was great."

"Don't!"

"They'll call you the fighting parson."

"I shall resign to-morrow. I must begin life all over again. It will be very hard."

"Resign nothing! By the way, I saw General Boderick in the crowd."

"Boderick? Oh, I must hurry. He must have my resignation before he has a chance to demand it."

"Don't you worry about him. I saw him waving his cane like mad when you got up from the floor and smashed that second-ward ruffian. He won't dare to say anything. His daughter thinks that he went up to the club."

"I shall resign. I am determined upon that."

"We'll all have something to say regarding that."

"But the newspapers to-morrow! It will be frightful."

"My dear fellow, I am about to visit each in turn, and you can remain in the carriage. I'll take upon myself to fix it up so that it will receive scarcely any mention at all."

"My eternal gratitude is yours if you can accomplish that." There was a note of hope in the rector's voice.

It was after eleven o'clock when Cathewe deposited the rector before the parsonage. Cathewe was a great favorite with the newspaper men, and he had had no trouble at all in suppressing the sensational part of the affair.

As for the rector, he sank wearily into his study chair and buried his face in his hands. He had won one fight, but he had lost another of far more importance. Somehow, he had always just reached the promised land to feel the earth slip from under his feet. He was a failure. The

only thing he had to be thankful for was that he stood alone in his disgrace. His father and mother were dead. Where should he go from here? He hadn't the slightest idea. He certainly would never don the cloth again, for this disgrace would follow him wherever he went. He was unfitted for mercantile life; he loved outdoors too well. If only he possessed the talent of Cathewe, who could go anywhere and live anywhere, without altering his condition! Well, he would go to the far West; he would put his geological learning into action; and by the time the little money he had saved was gone, he would have something to do.

Ah, but these things did not comprise the real bitterness in his heart. He had stepped outside the circle, stepped down below the horizon of her affairs. True, his wildest dreams had never linked his

life with hers; but the nearness to her was as life to him. And now all that was over.

He reached for his writing-pad and wrote his resignation. It was a frank letter, straightforward and manly. He sealed it and stole out and deposited it in the letter-box just in time for the night collector to take it up. He had burned his bridges. They would be only too glad to get rid of him. He was absently straightening the papers on his table, when a small blue envelope attracted his attention. A faintness seized him as he recognized the delicate handwriting. It was an invitation, couched in the most friendly terms, to dine with General and Miss Boderick the following evening. If only he had seen this note earlier! He bent his head on his arms, and there was no sound save the wind in the chimney.

"The rector, sir," announced the general's valet.

"Show him in here, James, and light up," said the general.

When the rector entered, the general greeted him cheerfully.

"Sit down, sit down, and let us talk it all over," the general began. "I have not yet turned over your resignation to the trustees; and yet, in my opinion, this resignation is the best thing possible under the circumstances. You were not exactly cut out for a minister, though you have done more good to the poor than a dozen of your predecessors. I wish to apologize to you for some thoughts I have harbored against you. Wait a minute, wait a minute," as the rector raised a protesting hand. "I have called you a milksop because you always accepted the trustees' rebuffs with a meek and lowly spirit. But

when I saw you lick half a dozen ruffians last night (yes, I was there; and while I'm a churchman, I am a man and a soldier besides), I knew that I had done you an injustice. By the way, are you related to the late Chaplain Allen of the ——st Regiment?"

"He was my father," wonderingly.

"Humph!"

"It was out of regard for him that I became a divinity student."

"Parsons sons are all alike. I never saw a parson's son who wasn't a limb of the Old Scratch. You became a divinity student after you left Harvard?"

The rector sent his host a startled glance.

"Oh, I have heard all about that episode; and I like you all the better for it. You should have been a soldier. We used to call your father the 'fighting parson.'

Now, I've a proposition to make to you. Do you know anything about mining? anything about metals and geology?"

"Yes, sir; I have had a large reading upon those subjects." The rector's heart was thumping.

"A practical knowledge?"

"As practical as it is possible for a man in my position to acquire."

"Very good. It is a sorry thing to see a young man with misdirected energies. I'll undertake to direct yours. In January I want you to go to Mexico for me."

"Mexico?"

"Mexico. I have large mining interests there which need the presence of a man who can fight, both mentally and physically. I will pay you a good salary, and if you win, some stock shall go with the victory. Now don't think that I'm doing this out of sympathy for you. I am

looking at you from a purely commercial point of view. Will you accept?"

"With all my heart," with a burst of enthusiasm.

"That's the way to talk. We'll arrange about the salary after dinner. Now, go down to the music-room. You will find Miss Boderick there. She will manage to entertain you till dinner time; and while you are about it, you may thank her instead of me. I shouldn't have thought of you but for her. Don't worry over what the newspapers have said. In six months this affair will have blown over, and you will have settled the mining dispute one way or the other. You will excuse me now, as I have some important letters to write. And, mind you, if you breathe a word that I was at the fight last night . . . "

So the Reverend Richard Allen stole

quietly down to the music-room. It was dark; and he entered softly and sat down in a corner at the farther end of the room, so as not to disturb the musician. In all the years of his life, the life which numbered thirty variegated years, he had never known such happiness.

In the study above the general chuckled as he wrote, and murmured from time to time the word: "Milksop!"

3525 .A2423 .B4 C.1
best man.
Stanford University Libraries
3 6105 036 384 449

3525
.A2423
.B4

DATE DUE

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA
94305